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CHILE AND THE ARGENTINE.

Santiago, Chile, August, 1898.—There is great danger of a war breaking out between the Argentine Republic and Chile within the next three months. The masses of the Chileans want it, and popular meetings are held all over the country demanding it. Not long ago the secretary of war resigned from the cabinet, telling the president that he accepted the place because he supposed that Chile was going to fight the Argentine, and that if there was to be no war he preferred to resign. The president and his administration would like to avoid a conflict if possible, but the feeling of the people is such that the least overt act on the part of the Argentines would inflame them beyond control. The government appreciates this, and it has for months been making military and naval preparations. The national guard has been called out, and at this writing 30,000 men are under arms and soldiers are being rigidly drilled in every part of Chile. I saw them first in the northern provinces. At Valparaiso I found the Alameda filled with young men going through the military evolutions of the German army many hours a day, and the drills of the artillery, cavalry and infantry are to be seen daily in the parks of Santiago. In the meantime every one is talking war. You hear it in the clubs and on the streets. Congress sits in secret sessions on the subject, and at a convention held a few weeks ago resolutions asking the administration to declare war were adopted and sent to the president. At the same time the people of the Argentine are also much excited over the situation and the newspapers of both countries are filled with war editorials.

The trouble between the two countries is as to just where the boundary between Chile and the Argentine Republic lies. This has been the subject of diplomatic discussion for years, and it has again and again threatened to cause war. In 1876 the relations of the two countries were so strained over this matter that an armed conflict seemed imminent, and it was only avoided by the governments negotiating for a joint commission of experts to mark out the boundary line. The present excitement is the result of the conflicting interpretations of the treaties which were made through these negotiations. The first attempt to settle the matter failed. Another trial was made in 1878, but it was not until 1881 that a treaty was entered into, and this was largely the result of the friendly offices of Thomas O. Osborne, then our minister to Argentine, and his cousin, Thomas A. Osborne, who was then United States minister to Chile. This treaty stated that the boundary from Peru as far south as the fifty-second degree of latitude, which is about the eastern entrance to the Strait of Magellan, should be the cordillera of the Andes. The treaty stated that the frontier line should run along the highest summits of the mountains that divide the waters

and should pass between the sources of the streams which lie on one side or the other, the Argentine getting all on the side of those flowing into the Atlantic and Chile taking all on the Pacific side. In cases where the boundary line was not clear it was to be settled by two experts, one chosen by each country, and if they were not able to come to a decision a third agent chosen by both governments was to decide the matter. It was also provided that Chile should have no port on the Atlantic and the Argentine none on the Pacific. The line so fixed was to remain for all time, and if other matters of dispute arose they were to be submitted by the two governments to some friendly power for arbitration.

This was a beautiful treaty, full of common sense and brotherly love, but when the experts began to work on the boundary the temper of the people changed and all sorts of disputes arose. In 1895, in advance of his report to the government, the Chilean expert published his statement of the situation.

This was attacked at once by the Argentine press, and the relations of the two countries again became strained. Then a little later on the Argentine expert rushed into print in a book on the subject, which was bitterly attacked by the Chilean press and which is the cause of the war talk of today. According to this book the Chilean line in the south is close to the Pacific, while the people here believe it should be far inside of Patagonia. The land in question is, I am told, not worth the price of the powder that would be burned in the impending conflict; and, in fact, the real cause of the ill-feeling dates considerably further back. By this treaty the Strait of Magellan and the greater part of Tierra del Fuego are given to Chile. The Argentines think they should have a large part of them and that the Chileans have really no right to anything east of the Andes, although they have agreed to the contrary. They think Chile is scheming to grab a great part of their territory, as she did the rich nitrate fields of Peru, and feel that she is after a war of conquest. Chile feels that the Argentine took a large part of Patagonia from her, and knows that a port on the Pacific would be of great advantage to her neighbor. She knows the Argentine is growing and wants a war now before the Argentine gets so rich and powerful that she cannot hope to conquer her.

It is hardly probable that these troubles can ever be finally settled without a war. Both countries realize this, and the Argentines know that their best policy is to put the conflict off as long as possible. The Chileans must fight soon, if at all. They cannot stand the expenses of their present war establishment. I am told that the army and navy are now costing about \$80,000, gold, a day. Enormous sums have been spent for arms and ammunition, and during a visit which I made this week to the various military establishments here I found that the guns and

equipment are of the finest and most recent makes. The soldiers are armed with Mauser rifles. In the artillery barracks I was shown mountain guns which were made at the Krupp works in 1896, and other arms of the same date. The soldiers are well uniformed, and their drill is as good as that of any army of Europe. They have Prussian army officers as instructors, and the most rigid discipline has been enforced. The most arduous gymnastic exercises are practiced, so that the bodies of the men are like iron, and so that today there is not an army in the world that is more ready and better fitted to take the field than that of Chile. The buildings of the army and navy at Santiago and Valparaiso cover acres, and they are among the fine buildings of the country.

Just opposite the Moneda or the Chilean white house is the headquarters of the president's guard. This consists of 200 cavalry who are mounted on some of the finest horses of Chile. During my visit the commander held a review of the troops that I might see what the Chileans can do on horseback. They are among the best horsemen of the world, and it is a common expression that the Chilean is born on horseback. The president's cavalry moved as one man. The companies of troops went galloping over the hedges and ditches and hurdles, which are kept in the large court of the quarters for practice. Dummy soldiers in uniform were scattered about the ground to represent the wounded on the field of battle, and these the men pierced with their lances as they went galloping by. At the military school, or West Point of Chile, I saw the sons of the best families of the country undergoing the most rigid gymnastic and military training. Boys of from sixteen to eighteen, whose fathers are worth millions were marching through the same exercises as the recruits of the national guard. They handled their guns well and the discipline was perfect. There is a naval school at Valparaiso. There are military and naval clubs here, and Chile has military and naval journals subsidized by the state. There is no lack of martial spirit and the ambition in a military way of both old and young is boundless.

Speaking of the necessity for immediate action on account of expense, Senor Jorge Asta-Buruaga, the son of the former Chilean minister to the United States and for a time Chilean secretary of the legation at Washington, accompanied me on my tour of military inspection here. During the day I remarked several times on the splendid training and equipment of the men, when Senor Asta-Buruaga said: "Yes, they are very fine and they look very well, but Chile must use them soon if at all. We are like a man who has twenty-five fine carriages and nothing with which to keep them up. He may have the carriages brought around to his door every morning and