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BLAINE - CONKLING  
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By

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## P R E F A C E

The material for this thesis has been assembled from the Agricultural and Mechanical College Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Oklahoma University, Norman, Oklahoma and Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

An effort has been made to give character sketches of James A. Garfield, James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling in order that certain happenings which occurred during the long controversy between Mr. Blaine and Mr. Conkling could be explained and understood. The quarrel alone could not be held responsible for the whole controversy because two men like Mr. Blaine and Mr. Conkling, equally ambitious and powerful could not be expected to remain friends especially when they held such opposite characteristics. If they had not quarrelled over the Fry trouble it probably would have been something else.

The Fry investigation was given for the purpose of showing the high handed manner in which Mr. Conkling often took charge of matters in order to crush his opponents.

In this thesis it is not intended to leave the impression that each man was responsible for the defeats of the other but that each with the aid of other forces was able to deliver the blow that resulted in defeat for the other.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Dr. T. H. Reynolds, Head of the Department of History, for his advice and interest. Expressions of gratitude and appreciation are given to Miss Ruth Howard for her pleasant aid in proof reading, and to Miss Margaret Walters, reference librarian, and to the library staff in general for its courteous, pleasant and patient efforts to aid in the preparation of this thesis.

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Stillwater, Oklahoma  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE QUARREL

The Congress which assembled in 1866 found many problems before it to be settled. The problem of the states that had rebelled and then had been crushed, was to be solved. Just how should they be punished, and to what degree? What was their present status in the Nation? Should they be admitted back to the Union, and if so, under what conditions? Almost all of this Congress were Republicans, and they had quite a few problems to settle about the handling of affairs so their party would be able to hold control of the National Government for many years to come.

In the House of Representatives were three men who were ambitious and rising politicians. Each had gained recognition as a leader in his respective state, though a young man. They were just becoming leaders in the Republican party and in National affairs.

The first, James G. Blaine, was due to become one of the greatest leaders of the Republican party over one of the longest periods known in the history of the party.<sup>1</sup> By 1866, he was known as one of the cleverest parliamentarians ever elevated to the speaker's chair in the Maine House of Representatives.

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<sup>1</sup> For at least twenty-six years. 1866-1892



He was thirty-nine years of age, a little above medium height, robust and stood erect. From all descriptions his face, with his large intelligent brown eyes and his pink cheeks, must have been very attractive; already his hair was graying, his complexion smooth and white.<sup>2</sup>

He had a very pleasing personality and when he spoke his voice and eyes seemed to carry the thought to the listener as well as the words he chose. His voice was pleasing and, as a rule, he spoke in conversational tone, this along with his eyes which were very sympathetic, caused people to admire and respect him. Wherever he went, he seemed to catch and hold attention. His home was the gathering place of many groups, as he was a pleasing and polished host.

His manner was kind and gentle; he refused to carry a grudge or take a bitter debate outside the House of Congress if the other one was willing to forget them. He was often sarcastic but very quick to apologize, a great fighter as long as the fight actually was in progress, but the moment it stopped he was ready to shake hands. He liked his fellowman and made many friends. He loved his family and lived a clean life, morally and physically. He did not use tobacco, or drink intoxicating liquors.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Johnson Brigham, Blaine Conkling and Garfield (New York 1919) p.1.

<sup>3</sup>

Bam Donald Chidsey, The Gentleman from New York. A Life of Roscoe Conkling. (New Haven, 1966) p. 80.



He had a strong mind as shown by his ability to meet almost any argument raised in a debate or to handle conditions as they arose. He was often very witty and provided many a laugh for Congress. He also respected and entered into religious services at times, and could quote the Scriptures with ease.<sup>4</sup> In his debates, his diction and fluency of speech enabled him to make his major and minor premises well and forcefully, and to draw accurate conclusions.<sup>5</sup>

The second of the trio, Roscoe Conkling of New York, was forty years of age, was six feet two inches tall, and was very strong; he prided himself in his ability as a boxer, his carriage was erect and proud, towering above most men with his head tilted back and his deep blue eyes flashing.<sup>6</sup> His presence always demanded and held attention, wherever he was. So striking was his appearance that few men openly opposed him, and when they did, he could bring down upon them such a deluge of contempt and scorn in words that as a rule they were completely subdued. He had a head of curly, yellow hair with one curl dangling in front, often referred to as the "Hyperion Curl," his nose and beard were peaked, his great head set

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<sup>4</sup>Charles Edward Russell, Blaine of Maine, (New York, no date given) p. 115

<sup>5</sup>Brigham, op. cit., p. 4

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 5., Gail Hamilton, Biography of James G. Blaine (Norwich, Conn., 1895.) p. 180

above massive shoulders.<sup>7</sup> He felt himself a charmer and many of the ladies seemed to feel he was too; they made over him most of the time. He refused to appear in public unless his hair was just so, the curls in their true places ready to be admired. As many men in political life, he was a man of the world, and there were a number of stories about his moral life.<sup>8</sup> Neither friend nor foe doubted his courage or that he was a man of great mental strength; as an orator, he was good. His voice was not so pleasing as Mr. Blaine's, yet he could hold a crowd for hours. His ability to remember things and to use them in his talk was remarkable, thus often on short notice he would deliver well organized speeches. He seemed proud of his wit and ability to turn things to a disadvantage for those who opposed him; yet he was like many men who enjoy the feeling of superiority over others, he could not appreciate having the tables turned against him, especially

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<sup>7</sup> loc. cit., p. 180

<sup>8</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 116. At one time an editor of nation-wide reputation started to publish some of the facts about Conkling's moral life. Conkling learned about it, and went to his office and asked to see the proofs.

"Do you intend to print this article?" he asked.

"I do" said the editor steadily.

"Then I will kill you," said Conkling.

Only one witness was present, the editor's assistant. 'Mr. Blank gazed into Mr. Conkling's eyes,' said this man afterward. 'And as I stared at the scene I saw the fear of imminent death seizing the soul of my chief. There was in Mr. Conkling's voice something so unspeakably fierce and cruel and in his savage gaze something so appalling, that few men, I think, could have withstood him. He went out, and Mr. Blank almost collapsed at his desk. The article was never printed.'" Ibid, p. 117

if that made him a laughing stock before others. He never forgot a wrong; a good hater, he never forgave. One of his closest friends for many years said of him: "Conkling was a cold, austere man. He made but few friends but these few stuck to him as long as he would stick to them."<sup>9</sup>

The third man, James A. Garfield, of Ohio, was thirty five years old. In appearance, he had rather a bulky body, a great head, a strong neck and strong shoulders; he had high cheek bones and a rough complexion. His nose was prominent even with a full beard. In early life he had been a preacher and teacher, consequently his thoughts always ran along the academic line and he seldom spoke without preparation. In speaking he used the old type of oratory and his speeches as a rule were the finished product. He thought things out slowly and laboriously, always willing to search out and find the facts. This does not mean he had no store for knowledge, for he did, nor that he took a long time to prepare a speech, for with only five minutes of preparation he could deliver a well organized speech which covered the subject.<sup>10</sup> Many of the speeches which he made in Congress were applauded and often stopped by the speaker's gavel. He was able to in-

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Collier Platt, Platt's Reminiscences of Famous Political Events, Cosmopolitan (New York, 1909) XLVI p. 512

<sup>10</sup> Brigham, op. cit., p.4.

terest his hearers from the start without any warming up. He was a typical "Spell-binder." It is claimed that he could even make statistics eloquent.<sup>11</sup>

Before this time Mr. Garfield had made friends with Mr. Blaine. This friendship was to last through life. It seems Mr. Garfield took no part in the quarrel between Mr. Conkling and his friend, Mr. Blaine, and for that reason little space will be devoted to him in this chapter.

It is very doubtful if two men so different in their natures and ideals as Mr. Conkling and Mr. Blaine, both being ambitious to be leaders of their party, could ever have agreed enough to keep down strife. Neither was willing to take commands from the other, much less to help place the other one in the lead while he played a lesser part. Thus, sooner or later some other trifling matter probably would have caused the same controversy, even though it might rob each of the Presidency in later years.<sup>12</sup>

The first sign of ill feeling took place over a wager in which Mr. Conkling lost. This occurred at a dinner given by Honorable Henry C. Deming, who had been an editor, along with Mr. Park Benjamin, of a small newspaper

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 9. "The temperamental differences we have noted were so great that the two men would have jangled even if they had met in a prayer meeting." Russell, op. cit. p. 114

in which this motto was carried:

No pent up Utica contracts our powers

But the whole boundless continent is ours.

As the conversation drifted from the Utica, Mr. Conkling's home, to the motto in the newspaper, a discussion came up over who was the author of these lines and everyone in the company gaily gave varied answers, and the impression prevailed that it was Mr. Barlow. Mr. Conkling thought it was from Addison's "Cato" and went so far as to offer to bet a basket of champagne that he was right. Mr. Blaine tried to warn him that it was not, and not to make the bet as he knew the authorship. Mr. Conkling was so sure, that he persisted on betting, and Mr. Blaine called the bet. The lines were from Jonathan M. Sewall's "Epilogue to Cato" written for the Bow-street Theatre in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Mr. Conkling sent the basket of champagne, but somewhat resented the affair. Mr. Blaine then made a feast so the company could all enjoy it together. Mr. Conkling took it to heart so much that he would not attend the feast and insinuated that Mr. Blaine had been reading up on the subject just to catch him.<sup>13</sup>

On April 24, 1866, while the bill for reorganizing the army was being discussed, harmony prevailed until they reached section twenty.

Sec. 20, and be it enacted, that the Provost Marshal's Bureau shall hereafter consist of a provost marshal general, with the rank, pay and emoluments of a Colonel of Cavalry; all matters relating

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<sup>13</sup> Hamilton, op. cit., p.152



to the recruitment of the army and the arrest of deserters shall be placed under the direction and control of the bureau, under such regulation as the secretary of war may prescribe.<sup>14</sup>

At the conclusion of the reading of this section

Mr. Conkling arose and said:

I move to strike out section twenty of the bill. My objection to this section is that it creates an unnecessary office for an undeserving public servant; it fastens as an incubus upon the country a hateful instrument of war, which deserves no place in a free Government in time of peace.<sup>15</sup>

The officer he referred to as undeserving was James G. Fry. Mr. Conkling had little regard for General Fry because of some difficulties that had developed during the Civil War. In 1863 Mr. Conkling had been appointed by the War Department through Mr. Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, to go to western New York and investigate all frauds in the enlistment for the army there. At this time Mr. Fry was Provost Marshal General. During the investigation General Fry refused to take Mr. Conkling's suggestions about discharging certain men and also failed to keep in office some that Mr. Conkling felt should be retained. Mr. Conkling tried to secure the things he desired by taking them above General Fry to his superiors. But the superior officers refused to go against General Fry's wishes.

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<sup>14</sup> The Congressional Globe (Washington, D. C. 1866)  
39th Cong., 1st sess. pp. 2150-2151

<sup>15</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess. p. 2151



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Even though Mr. Conkling denied there was any personal quarrel, there can be no doubt that he had little use for General Fry and felt the "undeserving servant" should have his office as a Provost Marshal General discontinued.

To carry his point that there was no need for a Provost Marshal General he had the clerk to read a letter from Lieutenant General U. S. Grant to show that he felt there was no need for an office of this kind. Mr. Conkling turned the debate into a personal attack against General Fry by suggesting the only thing left for this bureau to do was to close its accounts so the War Department could know precisely what had become of the twenty-five million dollars turned over to the bureau.

He felt that General Fry was receiving as much as he deserved as he had not suffered any and had troubled western New York by sending them an assistant provost marshal, Major A. J. Haddock, General Fry's "crony and confidant"<sup>16</sup> who by fraud obtained a large amount of money for which he was convicted and fined ten thousand dollars. All during the investigation and afterwards, General Fry justified Major Haddock, or this was the understanding Mr. Conkling had of it. In painting a word-picture of General Fry's bureau, he said:

They turned the bureau of recruiting and drafting into one carnival of corrupt disorder, into a paradise of coxcombs and thieves....Officers of

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<sup>16</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess. p. 2151

this bureau who sought to stem the tide of fraud were removed without warning, and the whole machinery of the Government was subjected to miscreants and robbers. Communities petitioned and remonstrated in vain. The most palpable wrongs were refused redress. Men immeasurably the superior of General Fry, represented and protested, but they were spurned with magnificent disdain. Never was the insolence of office more offensively portrayed than it was by this man whom it is proposed to enrich.<sup>17</sup>

Thus he continued to bring charges and insinuations against General Fry and his bureau until his time expired and he would have continued had not objections been raised.

As soon as the gavel fell, Mr. Blaine was on the floor. When he was recognized he stated the reasons for inserting section twenty into the army bill as he was one of the committee who had drawn up the bill. The reasons for inserting it most were that General Grant had sent a letter through the regular channel of the War Department asking that the provost marshal bureau be continued. Mr. Blaine then caused the letter to be read and expressed the opinion that Mr. Conkling should not have made a personal attack upon General Fry, when he was not there to defend himself, just because he had at one time quarreled with General Fry in which it was generally understood that "that gentleman," Mr. Conkling, came out second best at the War Department.<sup>18</sup>

In defending General Fry, Mr. Blaine said:

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<sup>17</sup> loc. cit., p. 2151

<sup>18</sup> Globe., 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2152

James B. Fry is a most efficient officer, a high toned gentleman whose character is without spot or blemish; a gentleman who stands second to no officer in the American Army; and he is ready to meet the gentleman from New York and all other accusers anywhere and everywhere, and, Sir, when I hear the gentleman from New York rehearse in this House as an impeachment of General Fry, all the details of the recruiting frauds in New York, which General Fry used his best energies to repress with iron hands, a sense of indignation carries me beyond my personal strength and impels me to denounce such a cause of proceedings.<sup>19</sup>

This was too much for Mr. Conkling to be so openly criticized, and as was his habit, when he regained the floor, he turned on his opponent with scorn that would have silenced most of his adversaries. Addressing the speaker he said:

Mr. Speaker, if General Fry is reduced to depending for vindication upon the gentleman from Maine, he is to be commiserated certainly. If I have fallen to the necessity to taking lessons from that gentleman in the rules of propriety or of right or wrong, God help me.<sup>20</sup>

He then made the statement that he was willing to be responsible for what he had said "here and elsewhere;" he branded the statements of Mr. Blaine as false and when called upon to tell what was false, he evaded the question until he was able to bring in the fact that he was referring to the statement concerning a personal quarrel with General Fry and that he had come out second best. Mr. Blaine had not mentioned the personal quarrel, he had said a quarrel.

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<sup>19</sup> loc. cit., p. 2152

<sup>20</sup> loc. cit., p. 2152

Blaine then interpreted the statement "here and elsewhere" as a challenge which was cheap and below his notice.<sup>21</sup>

That night Mr. Conkling obtained a copy of what was to go into the Congressional Globe of his speeches and altered the statement concerning "here and elsewhere" to "at all times and places" as well as changing a few other statements. The next day Mr. Blaine objected to his making the changes because they made his reply ridiculous besides covering up his "bullyism."<sup>22</sup>

Conkling asked to see the papers and was permitted to see them, and then through a maze of words justified his correction with no intention of doing any injustice to Mr. Blaine, but claimed he changed the papers in order to condense them and to keep them from appearing clumsy. He then expressed his indifference for the gentleman from Maine and made a poor attempt to make Mr. Blaine's statement sound incorrect.<sup>23</sup>

These two days of bickering had come about over a question which had no place at all in the discussion over the army bill. Mr. Conkling had gone out of the way in order to give vent to his feelings toward General Fry. And from this the two men had enlarged an ever widening

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<sup>21</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2153

<sup>22</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2180

<sup>23</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 2180-2181

gap, Mr. Conkling growing more sarcastic, and at each chance showing his contempt for the "gentleman from Maine." Mr. Blaine seemed determined that he would not let Mr. Conkling brow-beat him or even gain a single victory out of the controversy. Any time during the two days the matter could have been dropped after any of the passage-at-arms, but was not and on the third day Mr. Blaine deliberately brought on a fresh supply of ammunition with which he hoped to blast Mr. Conkling out of the controversy and at the same time vindicate the attack made on himself as well as the one on General Fry. This was a letter from General Fry.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Conkling stated that he had no objection to the letter being read provided he would be permitted to answer what ever it contained about him, this agreed to, the clerk read the letter, in which General Fry thanked Mr. Blaine for having defended him when he had no way of doing it himself. He then told of how Mr. Conkling had made a case for himself by informing the War Department there was a need for an investigation in western New York, and in return was asked to take charge of the investigation for which he received three-thousand dollars while he was drawing pay as a Congressman, contrary to the law, at the same time insinuating this was only part of the pay he actually received. He further stated that the trouble between him and Mr. Conk-

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<sup>24</sup> Hamilton, op. cit., p. 166

ling was first, that Mr. Conkling was over zealous in prosecuting the cases of fraud in western New York, but in Utica, Mr. Conkling's home town and district, he did all he could to protect his friends while General Fry wanted to enforce the law in each section alike. Second, Mr. Conkling tried to get him to keep certain officers in western New York who he felt were not competent and when he removed them Mr. Conkling then carried it to the War Department over his head and failed to get any action from it. In answer to Mr. Conkling's charges that Major Haddock was a crony of his, he stated that he had only known Major Haddock a few months, had never received or made a social call from him or to him in any form; that he had caused the investigation against Major Haddock before Mr. Conkling had appeared on the scene and that he did stand by him until he found proof of his guilt and no longer, and then he pushed his prosecution. In regard to the twenty-five million dollars allotted to his bureau, he now had in the hands of the Public Printers a statement that had been examined by the second comptroller of the treasury and found correct. General Fry admitted there had been frauds in his department as well as in all others; that he had tried to correct these evils and felt they had been comparatively small. In defense of his part of the enlistment he had the approval of all of his superior officers as well as the late President. In closing he



charged Mr. Conkling with not being faithful to the honor of his office as judge advocate if the things he had charged him with were true, then Mr. Conkling should have attempted to bring charges at least, for he was receiving pay to investigate any frauds.<sup>25</sup>

Along with this letter General Fry sent a number of copies of letters from the War Department to uphold his statements.

Mr. Conkling asked for a committee to be appointed to investigate the charges in the letter as well as the matter which had become of vital interest to the public. In his explanation he cast a different light on the questions involved by claiming all these personal accusations had come upon him because he labored untiringly to search out the frauds and bring them to justice in spite of much opposition thus making it appear that this suffering was brought on him because he would not be a tool in the hands of this group of thieves, "marauders, and miscreants,"<sup>26</sup> who were robbing the Government; forgetting that he had started it all when he went out of his way to attack General Fry. After a long speech giving his answers to the accusations brought against him he brought Mr. Blaine into it again by stating his intention of inserting into the Congressional Globe part of Mr. Blaine's speech where

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<sup>25</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 2292-2293

<sup>26</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2151

he had accused Mr. Conkling of having a personal quarrel with General Fry, but that he would not take time to read it now. To this Mr. Blaine objected and forced him to have the clerk read it all so they could see the word "personal" was not in the speech and when the reading was finished he made a remark that it did not appear. Mr. Conkling admitted it did not but it made little difference as he had accused him of having a quarrel with General Fry. He then began to show he had never had a "personal" quarrel with General Fry. To prove this he said:

The Provost Marshal General was sent for to come into the room of the assistant Secretary of War during the day to give information, and he did come, and informed me of various things, among others, that Major Haddock was an estimable and honorable man.... He said further that the people of my district, all of them, as he understood it were cowards, drunkards and sneaks; that that was his information; that there was not, he believed, an honest man in that district, and if one could be found and set to discharge the duties of provost marshal, as soon as it was known by others they would immediately debauch him.

I was somewhat astounded at language like this, but I had no quarrel with General Fry.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Demas Hobbard of New York moved to appoint the committee for which Mr. Conkling had asked. Mr. Blaine attempted to emphasize the fact that Mr. Conkling had received pay for being judge advocate and Mr. Conkling denied he was ever commissioned only through the one letter, that the three-thousand dollars was for legal advice. When Mr. Blaine tried to make some comment Mr. Conkling refused to yield the floor to him saying, "No Sir, I do not wish to have anything to do

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<sup>27</sup>

Globe, 39th Cong. 1st sess. p. 2297

with the member from Maine, not even so much as to yield him the floor."<sup>28</sup>

Conditions were bad enough and should have been dropped long before, but neither man was willing to leave the thing until he had put in the last blow. Before Mr. Conkling took his seat he made one more attempt to sweep Mr. Blaine out of the controversy with a flood of scorn and contempt by the following:

Now Mr. Speaker, one thing further, if the member from Maine had the least idea how profoundly indifferent I am to his opinion upon the subject which he has been discussing, or upon any other subject personal to me, I think he would hardly take the trouble to rise and express his opinions; and as it is a matter of entire indifference to me what that opinion may be, I certainly will not detain the House by discussing the question whether it is well or ill founded, or by noticing what he says...."<sup>29</sup>

As soon as Mr. Blaine could gain the floor he made another passing statement in regard to the three-thousand dollars, then turning directly to Mr. Conkling who was showing his profound indifference to what the gentleman from Maine was saying, by busily writing, he brought down on Mr. Conkling one of the most scathing floods of sarcasm the "gentleman from New York" was ever forced to take. It was truly scorn for scorn.<sup>30</sup> He said:

As to the gentleman's cruel sarcasm, I hope he will

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<sup>28</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess. p. 2298

<sup>29</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess. p. 2298

<sup>30</sup> Hamilton, op. cit., p. 174

not be too severe. The contempt of the large-minded gentleman is so wilting; his haughty-disdain, his grandiloquent swell, his majestic, superimminent, over-powering, turkey-gobbles strut has been so crushing to myself and all the members of this House that I know it was an act of greatest temerity for me to venture upon a controversy with him. But Sir, I know who is responsible for all this. I know that within the last five weeks, as members of the House will recollect, an extra strut has characterized the gentleman's bearing. It is not his fault. It is the fault of another. That gifted and satirical writer, Theodore Tilton, of the New York Independent, spent some weeks recently in this city. His letters published in that paper embraced with many serious statements, a little jocose satire, a part of which was the statement that the mantle of the late Winter Davis had fallen upon the member from New York. The gentleman took it seriously, and it has given his strut additional pomposity. The resemblance is great. It is striking. Hyperion to a satyr, Thersites to Hercules, mud to marble, dunghill to diamonds, a singed cat to a Bengal tiger, a whining puppy to a roaring lion. Shade of the mighty David, forgive the almost profanation of that jocose satire.<sup>31</sup>

Like a group of boys the house roared with laughter, the Speaker called for order and laid the blame of letting the quarrel reach this point on the House as no one had risen to the point of order.

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<sup>31</sup> Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2299.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE FRY INVESTIGATION

"The military sun had set and the civil power had emerged from the shade in full splendor."<sup>1</sup> The House of Representatives was not going to let a mere soldier, whose day was over and whose military bureau had become obnoxious, attack one of its members and escape without reprimand.

The committee appointed set about

to investigate the statements and charges made by Hon. Roscoe Conkling, in his place against Provost Marshal General Fry and his bureau---whether any frauds have been perpetrated in his office in connection with the recruiting service; also to examine into the statements made by General Fry in his communication to Hon. Mr. Blaine, read in the House.<sup>2</sup>

The committee consisted of S. Shellabarger, Chairman, W. Windom, B. M. Boyer, B. C. Cook, and Samuel L. Warner. They set about gathering information and hearing evidence, and soon found they had much more material than they could examine while Congress was in session. The weather was hot and in many ways their job was not a pleasant one. They only dealt with one phase of the investigation, giving for their reasons, lack of time, the public expense, and labor. At first they thought of making a brief report to the House and of asking for further instructions, but decided that because the character of

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<sup>1</sup> James Barnet Fry The Conkling and Blaine-Fry Controversy in 1866 (New York, 1893)

<sup>2</sup> Reports of the committees of the House of Representatives, 1st. sess. 59th cong. III, Reports no. 93 p. 1.

one of the members of the House of Representatives had been assailed in a letter read before the House, then published in the permanent records of its proceedings, that member had due him the privilege of an investigation to free his character of the charges against him if they were not true. Therefore, through the influence of

the member thus charged [who] pleaded and insisted upon his privilege to have an early investigation of that branch of the case, and no objection was interposed by any party to its separate consideration and prompt decision, leaving the remaining branch of the investigation relating to the conduct of the bureau of the Provost Marshal General to the future action of the committee.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did they leave "the conduct" of General Fry to the future but seemed to have forgotten, or left to the future, the investigation of the statements and charges made by Hon. Roscoe Conkling against General Fry, for they were never investigated. Each of the charges made by General Fry against Mr. Conkling was found, according to the committee's opinion, without grounds and false. But the way they obtained the evidence for these conclusions was remarkable. Mr. Conkling seemed to have dominated the committee from beginning to end, and that General Fry had little opportunity to uphold his side of the case.

Because they were examining the charges against Mr. Conkling, he was given a rather free hand in the investigation, even to such an extent that he was able to prevent the entrance of a signed statement of the facts by General

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<sup>3</sup> Reports 1st sess., 39th Cong. III No. 93, p. 1



Fry, which the general had prepared to give to them as evidence by insisting that each witness named in the signed statement appear in person before the committee and be cross-examined. Mr. Conkling tried to force the committee to put General Fry on the stand for cross-examination but was refused, for if they had permitted him to call him for questioning, it would not have been to General Fry's advantage. General Fry felt he was not permitted to present his side as he would have liked. He says:

The proceedings continued through May and until late in June. The weather was hot, the adjournment of Congress was at hand, and the committee appeared to be heartily sick of its work. At a meeting on the 19th of June, testimony was taken as usual and there was more to come, but at the close of the session, the committee adjourned to meet on call of the Chairman, and that was the end of the investigation, the next meeting being on the 26th of June to hear argument of the counsel, I desired the committee to permit written argument and to wait for them but that was declined and it was decided that oral plea should be made on the evening of June 26th.

This fact came to his knowledge on the 25th of June.<sup>4</sup>

General Fry then made a brief of his case and sent it to his counsel, who made an oral plea before the committee.

Though this was the only part of the investigation that could have turned out in Mr. Conkling's favor, he placed one or two vital points upon very weak grounds in order to carry the committee to his side of the views. One of these was that General Fry had tried to persuade Theodore Allen to obtain evidence against Mr. Conkling

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<sup>4</sup> Fry, op. cit., p. 32

"at all hazards"<sup>5</sup> which would implicate Mr. Conkling in the frauds of the recruiting in Utica. General Fry did this because Mr. Conkling was a friend of Captain Crandell, whom General Fry wished to remove from the provost marshal department, and whom Mr. Conkling was trying to persuade the War Department not to remove. To do this, General Fry had held up \$54,000.00 of bounty money from Mr. Allen which was due from the bounty jumper and there was much doubt whether Mr. Allen could ever collect it,<sup>6</sup> but according to Mr. Allen's testimony General Fry called him to Washington and in his office promised to turn over the \$54,000.00 provided he would obtain evidence against Mr. Conkling. This Mr. Allen agreed to do and left, but did not go to Utica. He did send a telegram to General Fry stating he had been to Utica and wanted his money. General Fry, thinking he had really gone to Utica, had ordered his firm paid the \$54,000.00 which they received.<sup>7</sup>

There was no one's word to confirm this but Mr. Allen's and that he was an enemy of General Fry there can be no doubt, for when General Fry tried to regain the money which Mr. Allen had received and which did not belong to him but was for those who had advanced it, Mr. Allen fled to Canada to escape General Fry's order to arrest and hold him

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<sup>5</sup> Reports 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p. 166

<sup>6</sup> Reports 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, pp. 162-160

<sup>7</sup> Reports 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, pp. 165-168

in prison until it was repaid. He stayed there until he had obtained the approval of the War Department for the credits on the bounty jumpers.

The War Department did this in order to relieve a group of innocent persons who were losing their money. Mr. Allen's telegram read: "I have just returned from Utica. Colonel Ilges refuses to deliver the money received from me, because your order is dated the 11th instead of the 10th of March. Please answer through Colonel Baker." Theodore Allen.<sup>8</sup>

In order for the telegram to convey the thought that Mr. Allen tried to make it carry would take a vivid imagination, even with the story he told.

General Fry's confidential clerk who was present when Mr. Allen came into General Fry's office, stated he did not leave the two alone at any time. He further stated that the conversation mentioned above did not take place.<sup>9</sup>

That Mr. Allen was a notorious character there can be little doubt. He operated a saloon and gambling house; he had been in jail a number of times, and often in brawls. Both sides had witnesses to testify concerning Mr. Allen. A large number who testified for General Fry stated that they would not believe him on oath and that his character was bad; while those for Mr. Conkling stated he had a good

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<sup>8</sup> Reports, 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p. 176

<sup>9</sup> Reports, 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p. 338

character and his word could be relied upon. It seems strange indeed that an investigation called to investigate the charges of General Fry should be turned into a dispute over the story of Mr. Allen. For of the testimony of two hundred and twenty-two pages, one hundred of them are given over to the testimony of Mr. Allen and testimony regarding his character.

Mr. A. G. Riddle, counselor of General Fry, presented the oral argument to the committee on June 26, 1866, with many interruptions from Mr. Conkling who tried to show that some of his strongest arguments were false, but could not do so; however, it must have had weight with the committee as well as to blunt the sharpened points brought out by the counsel. This oral argument was followed by the argument of Hon. Roscoe Conkling on the same day, who had much to say about Mr. Allen's story and remarked at length about General Fry's refusing to testify, or to be examined.

Does General Fry dare to present himself as a witness and testify that he even heard or dreamed anything of the kind? On the contrary, he has been called upon repeatedly in the presence of the committee, to come forward as a witness and purge himself. He has been notified, as the records show, that it was charged and believed that he dare not submit himself to cross-examination; and yet he has refused and has even submitted to the degradation of hearing his counsel announce, to go down on record, that he declined to be cross-examined, and that if I obliged him to testify, or if the committee obliged him to testify, it must be as my own witness, and with the understanding that I should not be at liberty to im-

peach or contradict him.<sup>10</sup>

With many other words of like tone he made it appear that General Fry was afraid to face him on the witness stand. Forgetting that he was being investigated just as was General Fry and that they were equals.

To this argument Mr. Riddle answered with a short reply. He answered Mr. Conkling's remarks regarding General Fry being afraid to face him that he "could not be driven to it." He said:

Does he not remember that your record shows that General Fry never opened his mouth as a witness? Was never examined in chief? That my own position always was, that we were not here as suitors, or prosecutors, or defendants; that it was the investigation of the House, and that for every purpose General Fry was entirely at the disposition of the committee as a witness; and that it's slightest intimation would have put him on the stand; that the gentleman might call him and put to him any form of interrogatory allowable in the examination of an adverse party? Did not the committee solemnly rule that General Fry could not be cross-examined, as he was never examined in chief, but that if Mr. Conkling called him as a witness they would allow any latitude of examination? and yet 'he did not submit to cross-examination, and because he dare not'--- dare not face the gentleman.<sup>11</sup>

The committee after the investigation came to the conclusion

That all the statements contained in the letter of General James B. Fry to Hon. James G. Blaine, ...in so far as such statements impute to the Hon. Roscoe Conkling, a member of this house, any criminal, illegal, unpatriotic, or otherwise improper conduct or motives, either as to the matter of his procuring himself to be employed by the

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<sup>10</sup> Reports, 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p. 300

<sup>11</sup> Reports, 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p. 331

government of the United States in the prosecution of military offences in the State of New York, in the management of such prosecutions, in taking compensation therefor, or in any other charge are wholly without foundation in truth, and for this publication there were, in the judgment of this House, no facts connected with said prosecutions furnishing either a palliation or an excuse.<sup>12</sup>

Some of General Fry's statements were overdrawn and part of them were not true, but by no means all of them were false as stated by the committee who had forgotten it seems that General Fry had written the letter because Mr. Conkling had gone out of his way in a speech to attack General Fry and was trying to defend himself. They seemed to feel that General Fry had insulted the House and was subject to punishment if the House desired to punish him, but if they did they would also have to punish one of their members, Mr. Blaine.

They also decided the investigation of the statements by Mr. Conkling against General Fry should be left up to the War Department should they care to do so. They ruled Mr. Conkling had a perfect right to the \$3,000.00 he had received.<sup>13</sup>

In discussing the report of the committee the House took a few slaps at Mr. Blaine, who was absent (sick) but his colleague, Mr. Frederick A. Pike, defended him. Others suggested they should send General Fry to prison where he

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<sup>12</sup> Reports 1st sess., 39th Cong. III no. 93, p.34

<sup>13</sup> Globe, 1st sess., 39th Cong. pp. 3935-3948

belonged, but they did not have that power.

On the day that the committee presented its report to the House for them to consider, General Fry, or someone for him, had placed on the desks and in the hands of most of the Representatives a duplicate letter stating that he had not been given fair treatment by the committee in that they would not let him have a copy of the records on the case even with his furnishing the expenses, nor would they allow him to even enter a written plea prepared by him or his counsel. He finished the letter by reasserting that the facts of his letter, read by Mr. Blaine, were true. This caused many of the members to bring down upon him their sharp denunciation.

Having upheld the honor of one of its members who had been unjustly and criminally accused by a mere clerk and gently correcting one of its boisterous members, the House of Representatives washed their hands of the matter. The friends of Mr. Conkling congratulated him on his new victory, but the world outside did not all feel that way. Many felt that "Fry's vindication may be regarded as conclusive."<sup>14</sup>

The War Department seems to have disagreed with the House for General Fry was appointed Major-general by brev-

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James Kendell Hasmer, "Outcome of the Civil War," in The American Nation a History (New York, 1907) XXI p. 260



et, for faithful, meritorious, and distinguished services in the Provost-Marshal-General's Department July 17, 1865. This was confirmed by the Senate. He was appointed brigadier general by brevet with special mention of his service in the Army and the Senate again confirmed his appointment. Next he was made colonel by brevet and colonel in the Adjutant General's Department and was confirmed.<sup>15</sup>

It seems the War Department was determined to see that their gallant son was not to suffer the humiliation at the hands of the House of Representatives just because he chose to defend himself when accused of using the Government Machine to help robbers rob the people of their money, without some balm to soothe his sensitive feelings.

Conkling meant just what he said when he stated: "I do not wish to have anything to do with the member from Maine, not even so much as to yield the floor to him."

He never got over the sarcastic remarks hurled at him in return for his own sarcasm. From that day on, if he ever spoke or addressed Blaine, there is no record of the fact available. Blaine and Conkling were often thrown together in groups and at times friends would try to trick them into saying something to each other, but without success.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, op. cit., p.176; Historical Register and Dictionary of Army, 1789-1903 (Washington, 1903) I p.439 Records the first of these appointments to be in 1865 instead of 1866.

<sup>16</sup> Once while riding with a group on a train in which a

That they fought on every measure would be carrying it too far, for at times when a bill or some other vital cause of the Republican party was at stake they would work together through friends sending information and "tips" back and forth. Once when a bill was closely contested for which Mr. Conkling was working, Mr. Blaine, who also favored the bill, sent a mutual friend to Mr. Conkling, as he himself could not talk with Mr. Conkling, telling him of a certain Senator who opposed the bill which Mr. Blaine could not influence but he felt Mr. Conkling could. As soon as the news reached Mr. Conkling he made a dash for the man.<sup>17</sup>

Mr. Blaine did not care to hold a grudge, and often stated he did not care to have Mr. Conkling for an enemy and would be glad to drop the ill feeling. Friends of both men often discussed with them the possibility of dropping the controversy, and when they approached Mr. Blaine, he always assured them that he had no desire to

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good deal of gayety was taking place, a rather amazing incident took place. "In a careless moment Mr. Conkling produced some confection or other and began to pass it around, apparently without thinking of the great gulf fixed between himself and his constructive foe. When it should have come to Mr. Blaine, there was a visible rudimentary movement of Mr. Conkling's proffering hand toward Mr. Blaine; but alas! the habit of a lifetime prevailed, his good angel of gayety forsook him and fled, more to Mr. Conkling's chagrin, possibly, than to any other person's. 'Would you have taken it if he had offered it?' asked a friend of Mr. Blaine afterward. 'Certainly, if it had choked me!' was the careless reply." Hamilton, op. cit., p. 178

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 178

carry it on, and would be glad to make a statement that under the heat of discussion he had made some harsh statements, provided Mr. Conkling would do the same. The friends would go to Mr. Conkling and the matter would end there. Even Mr. Conkling refrained from making many comments on the subject. At one time, Mr. Blaine went so far as to offer to prepare the best dinner he could get up and invite Mr. and Mrs. Conkling along with a goodly number of friends of both men if he could have the assurance that Mr. Conkling would accept the invitation. The friends went to Mr. Conkling, but the invitation did not ever have a chance to be sent.<sup>18</sup> Mr. Blaine, at heart, did not care so much whether Mr. Conkling became his friend or not, as there were things about his ways and ideals that clashed with his, but he would have been willing to have been friendly with him, but could not make advances toward him until he knew that Mr. Conkling was willing to do the same.<sup>19</sup>

Mr. Conkling was a man of deep feeling and he seemed willing to give up many things for a friend or a principle he felt was right, but being so sensitive he could not get over the humiliation which he had received at the hands of Mr. Blaine in his sarcasm, or the fact that Mr. Blaine had caused General Fry's letter to be read charging him of so many base acts. He probably realized that there was a great distance between his conception of life, tastes, and attitudes and those of Mr. Blaine. If they should "make

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 177

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 178

up", soon there would be another breach, thus it might be best to leave things as they were.

But instead of the affair remaining just a personal quarrel, it entered into almost every convention and campaign in which these two men took part, and thus, spread into the Republican party itself and became one of the factors which selected or defeated the highest offices of our Nation. It more than likely robbed each man of the office all because of a breach which was opened by a childish, undignified and personal quarrel in Congress.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Brigham, op. cit., p.

CHAPTER THREE  
 THE BATTLE FOR PRESIDENCY

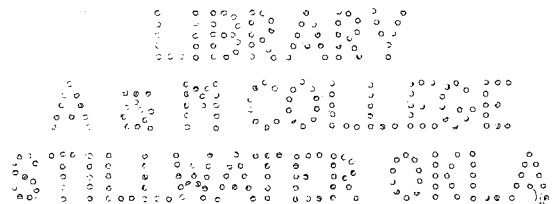
In following the controversy between Mr. Blaine and Mr. Conkling between 1866-1884, during which each was able to deliver the other many serious blows, only those things which deal with the strife between them and its influence upon each will be discussed.

There is no desire to leave the impression at any time that the controversy was the only cause which entered into the defeats handed each man, but that in almost every case if there had been friendship, and in most only a neutral attitude, the other forces would not have been strong enough to defeat either.

During the period from 1867 to 1876 little took place between the two men but Mr. Conkling had not forgotten nor was he idle. President Grant and his men were in power, and most of his men were making themselves as powerful as possible, Mr. Conkling being no exception. He was one of Mr. Grant's right-hand men, and received as a favor from the President the control of Federal patronage in the State of New York.<sup>1</sup> He gained control of almost every office from the Governor down and for the next ten years with the help of the New York City "custom house crowd" he became the almost undisputed leader of his party in New

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Murphy, a leader of the "Custom House gang", Bookman, (New York, May, 1907) XXV p. 234



York.<sup>2</sup>

Few of his followers were strong for him; they felt he was overrated, but he had a powerful machine built and could control them. It was known that he often neglected the serious business of his office and devoted himself to the promotion of his personal fortunes. If he had dropped from power few would have bothered much about it. Thus, it appears strange that with his "obtrusive vanity and quarrelsomeness" he should have ended his political career at an early stage.<sup>3</sup>

On the death of Chief-Justice Chase, President Grant offered the place to Mr. Conkling,<sup>4</sup> who refused, probably for the reason he did not wish to be tied down and, too, there was a chance he might be able to take President Grant's place if things continued favorable.

As the National Republican Convention at Cincinnati in 1876 drew near things began to look unfavorable for Mr. Conkling and worse still, they were beginning to point toward his dear enemy, Mr. Blaine, who was "the leading can-

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<sup>2</sup> Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1950) IV p. 346. James G. Blaine Twenty years of Congress (Norwich, Conn. 1866) II pp. 518-520

<sup>3</sup> The New York Senatorship, The Nation (New York, January 23, 1879) XVIII p. 63. No author given.

<sup>4</sup> William Archibald Dunning, Reconstruction Political and Economic in The American Nation a History, (New York, 1907) XXII p. 263

didate"<sup>5</sup> by far. There were many others but they were Favorite Sons and there seemed little hope of stopping "Blaine of Maine." "It was Conkling, therefore, that throughout March and April labored like a man at a loom to induce the states that had Favorite Sons to secure Favorite Son delegations"<sup>6</sup> with which he hoped to prevent Mr. Blaine's nomination on the first ballot, feeling sure if he could that the peculiar psychology of the country would be such that Mr. Blaine would not be able to gain the nomination. Just before the convention three other factors entered in to weaken Mr. Blaine; the railroad scandal, the Mulligan letters and the stroke he had on Sunday morning, June 11, three days before the convention, just as he was entering a church for worship. The first two had kept him too concerned to canvass and the last created doubt in the mind of many of his friends, but if Mr. Conkling had only have been out of the way he would have over-ridden them.

The New York delegates were to vote for Mr. Conkling and if he were not able to carry the convention he saw to it that they were not to go to Mr. Blaine.

"During the month of March Senator Conkling advised that, in event of his failure to receive the nomination,

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<sup>5</sup> Edward Stanwood, James Gillespie Blaine, (Boston & New York, 1905) p. 179

<sup>6</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 273



the votes of the New York delegation should be given to Rutherford B. Hayes, of Ohio."<sup>7</sup>

At the Convention it was easy to see that many had come to see that Mr. Blaine received the nomination. Robert C. Ingersol, one of the greatest orators of that day, nominated Mr. Blaine as The Plumed Knight, a Statesman, a Plumed Knight who was a stranger to defeat, fearless in his shining armor, casting his lances into the rank of the enemy. By some this was one of the master speeches of all conventions, and it made Mr. Ingersoll almost as popular as the man he had nominated. The crowd cheered until it looked as if it would be a stampede for Mr. Blaine but order was restored and nominations continued.

On the first ballot Mr. Blaine led by a large margin but not quite a majority, and thus Conkling had dealt his first blow as planned and for five more ballots no one came close to Mr. Blaine's lead and on the seventh the Favorite Sons were collapsing and Mr. Blaine only needed seventeen votes and it looked as if his nomination was sure.

Conkling's New Yorkers faced defeat. But they never lost nerve or resources. The Chairman's gavel was raised to call for the seventh ballot; he had even begun to speak when a New York delegate rushed out upon the floor and moved that the convention take a recess for ten minutes. The fate of James G. Blaine hung upon that moment; all the ambition and labors of all these years depended upon it. Chairman McPherson hesitated. Then he declared the motion out of order, but at that instant he lost control of the convention,

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<sup>7</sup> Alfred A. Conkling, Life and Letters of Roscoe Conkling (New York, 1889) p. 507

confusion stormed the place, designedly no doubt; the roll call was interrupted, the New York and Pennsylvania delegations left their places and agreed upon the connected stroke.<sup>8</sup>

Nine of the New York delegates bolted and voted for Mr. Blaine but even Mr. Blaine, who was watching the convention at home in Washington over a special wire, knew the changing tide would send Rutherford B. Hayes, of Ohio over the crest and before the voting was finished Mr. Blaine sent his congratulations and offered his services.<sup>9</sup>

The second blow of Mr. Conkling had landed well and at the right moment, even though he was not able to take the bout and claim the nomination, he had made the decision a draw, thus robbing his opponent of his long cherished hope. Maybe the "whimpering puppy" had taken on some likeness of "a roaring lion."

Mr. Conkling cared very little if at all for Mr. Hayes, but that did not matter, he had a score to settle with the Gentleman from Maine, and it looked as if he had removed him from his place in politics and would no longer have to associate with him. But Mr. Blaine soon took the place of Lot M. Morrill of Maine in the Senate. Again the two foes almost trod upon one another, yet never speaking or even acknowledging the other's presence

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<sup>8</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 317

<sup>9</sup> Stanwood, op. cit., p. 186

or existence. "the two most conspicuous figures upon the political horizon, carrying on the fight to the finish.... Conkling had the prestige of the late victory. But Blaine of Maine---he is a patient man; he can wait. He knows that the victory of today is beaten tomorrow, and he looks with deliberation toward the next round."<sup>10</sup>

President Hayes would not run things to please Mr. Conkling who became his enemy. Disgusted with President Hayes and anxious for the return of the old order of politics, Mr. Conkling became the leader in the movement for the renomination of Grant in the coming convention of 1880.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Conkling had always been a strong supporter for Mr. Grant. Then with him as a wedge Mr. Conkling hoped to defeat Mr. Blaine. The seventy votes of New York were to go to Mr. Grant.

Th There was no doubt again that Mr. Blaine was the leading candidate.

The convention held at Chicago in 1880 found another great throng who had come to see that Blaine of Maine received his long deserved reward and among the delegates who were for Blaine or Sherman there was a determination that Mr. Grant must be defeated. Was not Mr. Conkling his right hand man?

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<sup>10</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 329

<sup>11</sup> Johnson and Malone, op. cit., p. 347

When Mr. Blaine was nominated the applause was so long and loud that a delegate from Missouri complained that the mob in the gallery would rule the convention if they were not forced to stop cheering in a reasonable time, and if they were not going to use discretion the galleries should be closed.

William P. Frye of Maine, seconding the nomination, made a good speech, which covered up the poor efforts of the first, representing Mr. Blaine as the hero pilot of "The State of Maine" who had guided it through troubled seas into a safe harbor, and would do the same for the United States. This brought forth another flood of cheering. When it died down the nominations continued.<sup>12</sup> Mr. Conkling arose and marched down the aisle to the platform with dignity of a great warrior and had to wait for a long time for the applause to close so that he could make his nomination of Mr. Grant. In presenting his old friend, he made a noble speech which received a roar of applause.

The struggle was a desperate one, not until the fifth day was the roll called; on the first ballot General Grant had 304 votes and Mr. Blaine 284. There were twenty-eight roll calls that day and General Grant ranged between 302 and 309 and Mr. Blaine between 276 and 285; the next day five votes were taken. General Grant received 313 on the

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<sup>12</sup> Proceedings of the Republican National Convention  
(Chicago, 1860) p. 176-179

thirty-fifth then dropped to 270. It thus became plain that neither General Grant nor Mr. Blaine could win. A dark horse had been trailing along the first thirty-three ballots with only one vote but on the next gave signs of a strong finish. He had seventeen votes to his favor; one more reckoning found him with fifty and the road ahead filled with tired and failing horses.

The thirty-sixth ballot gave Mr. Garfield 399 votes and the nomination. Mr. Conkling at once moved that it be unanimous, and it was made so. Mr. Conkling stated while on the floor that he trusted

the zeal, the fervor, and the unanimity seen in this great assemblage will be transplanted to the field of the final conflict, and that all of us who have borne a part against each other will be found with equal zeal bearing the banner--with equal zeal carrying the lance of the Republican party into the ranks of the enemy.<sup>13</sup>

On the first ballot for Vice-President, Chester A. Arthur was nominated.

The Republican Party had developed two branches which had not yet shown very plainly until the convention of 1880. One division under the leadership of Mr. Conkling and General Grant was becoming known as the Stalwarts, one of whom was Mr. Arthur. The other division led by Mr. Blaine was now branded the Half-Breeds; General Garfield was a Half-Breed.

The two opponents had clashed again and neither with a decisive victory, Mr. Conkling's man had lost

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid p. 277

but then he had again defeated the hope of Mr. Blaine.

Even though the friends of Mr. Blaine held Mr. Conkling responsible for their man's defeat, it is true that he did not think much of General Garfield and after it was over, stated that he had rather Mr. Blaine had received the nomination than for General Garfield; also to have stated before the convention that there was to be no dark horse, either Mr. Blaine or General Grant was to be nominated.

When the dead lock between General Grant and Mr. Blaine had been reached, Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire, is reported to have suggested to Mr. Blaine that if he could not be nominated it would be well to place Mr. Conkling on the ticket, and Mr. Blaine had agreed, when a third party took the news to Mr. Conkling. He was surprised but was determined to place General Grant if he could and the move stopped. On the thirty-sixth ballot when things were breaking in favor of General Garfield, someone went to Mr. Conkling and urged him to stop the stampede by casting the whole vote of New York for Mr. Blaine. Mr. Conkling hesitated, but could not bring himself to do this, thus the twenty votes of Mr. Blaine in New York who had bolted under the leadership of William H. Robertson, went to General Garfield and fifty to General Grant and General Garfield was nominated.<sup>14</sup> Thus they might for a moment be on the verge of

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<sup>14</sup> Stanwood, op. cit., p. 259-260

dropping enmity for the good of the party, but their plan constantly showed a different side, Mr. Blaine saw to it that if he could not win then General Garfield should win for he had more than one score to settle with General Grant and Mr. Conkling, besides if General Grant went in, would not Mr. Conkling be the man of power? Why should not Mr. Blaine have this place if he could not be President? He pulled the right string and the party fell in line and General Grant's third term and Mr. Conkling's power faded. Now the gentleman from Maine was to be the power behind the chair, maybe after all Mr. Blaine had not lost the decision.

The effects of the results of the Convention upon the two men were "totally different in accordance with their different natures." Mr. Blaine sent his congratulations and entered into the support of the candidate at once and with much ardor.<sup>15</sup> But when the results became apparent to Mr. Conkling, he sat in his tent and glared. "His eyes according to a contemporary description glittered like a snake's, Blaine had won that bout in the long duel, but Conkling looked for another."<sup>16</sup>

The pit he had dug for his enemy had now taken him. Another Achilles sat down in his tent and sulked.

The Atlantic Monthly felt the choice of General

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<sup>15</sup> Henry L. Daves, Garfield and Conkling, Century Magazine, (New York, January, 1894) XXV p. 341

<sup>16</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 367.



Garfield and Mr. Arthur was a wise one by the Republican party, as it was doubtful whether Mr. Blaine could have carried New York, but with the confidence they had in Mr. Garfield and his running-mate the nearest political friend of Mr. Conkling they were doubly assured of the election.<sup>17</sup>

Mr. Blaine entered into the campaign from the first and did much to popularize General Garfield with the people. Everywhere he went great crowds flocked to hear him and fall into line.

But the election of General Garfield began to hang by doubtful cords. The Democrats were publishing every bit of scandal possible against him. With their favorite, Mr. Blaine, out of the way many Republicans were not as enthusiastic as they would have been.

In the state election of Maine the Democrats had swept the state. This caused many a chill to scampor down the backs of the Republican leaders, the saying "as Maine goes so goes the election" gave them no consolation. If the Republicans were to lose New York all hope would be gone, and with Mr. Conkling's profound indifference the hope for that state grew dim.

All advances toward him were spurned and the ques-

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<sup>17</sup> The Republicans and their Candidate, Atlantic Monthly (Boston and New York, Aug., 1880) XLVI p. 260  
no author given.

tion, What would Mr. Conkling do? was a burning one.

A few slips by friends of General Garfield did much to keep General Grant and Mr. Conkling out of the campaign. "An indiscreet remark from Garfield's next friend, thanking God for the nation's delivery from Grant-ism! A leading Ohio journal injudiciously congratulated the Republican party on its emancipation from the baneful rule of Grant and Conkling!"<sup>18</sup>

After weeks of solicitude by General Garfield and his friends, General Grant agreed to enter the campaign and in time obtained the consent of Mr. Conkling to go with him. But after doing this he seemed to still loathe Mr. Garfield. Mr. Conkling stated if it were not for disgracing the Republican party he would rather spend the time required for making the campaign in Mohawk Street jail than enter upon it.<sup>19</sup> Upon such insistence from General Garfield, Mr. Conkling paid him a visit at Mentor. As the party alighted, General Garfield rushed bare-headed out into the rain, embracing him, and is reported to have said: "Conkling, you have saved me! Whatever man can do for man, that will I do for you."<sup>20</sup>

According to Mr. Conkling, Mr. Garfield tried to have a private conversation with him alone, but because

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<sup>18</sup> Brigham, op. cit., p. 18

<sup>19</sup> Conkling, op. cit., p. 629

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 623

of his distrust for Mr. Garfield he kept one of his friends by his side as a witness, so nothing ever came of the meeting in the way of an agreement.

After his return from Mentor, Mr. Conkling told Thomas G. Platt that General Garfield had promised to recognize the New York organization if elected. Mr. Platt asked: "'Do you believe him?' to which Conkling replied, 'No, but we will try him out.'"<sup>21</sup>

The Republican party won the election and the future President had before him a delicate situation, of choosing his advisors, and the giving out of jobs. Mr. Blaine lost no chances in showing that he and his followers were the General's true friends and could be relied upon while the Stalwart faction should receive justice and respect but they should be watched to see that no trouble was started.<sup>22</sup>

More and more did Mr. Garfield lean upon Mr. Blaine for advice and then follow it. Soon it was whispered around that he was to be the Secretary of State but before it had been made public Mr. Blaine came to Henry L. Dawes and asked him what he thought of his taking it. Mr. Dawes advised against it on the ground that he thought it would renew again the old hate between Mr. Blaine and Mr. Conkling even hotter than before, but Mr. Blaine felt

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid p. 623

<sup>22</sup> Platt, op. cit., p. 515

that he would treat Conkling's group in such a kindly manner as to win them over so he accepted the position.

When the report of his acceptance got out, even before it was officially announced, a storm began to gather. No effort was made to stop the coming storm and soon bitter speeches were being made on both sides. Mr. Conkling felt it was a premeditated attempt to humiliate him and his followers. He was in no frame of mind to give any ground.<sup>23</sup>

To soothe him, Mr. Garfield thought of giving him a place in the Cabinet, but when he spoke of this to Mr. Blaine it did not appeal to his fancy to have Mr. Conkling in the same Cabinet with him because it would be unpleasant, and besides it would only cause more grief as Mr. Conkling could not get along with any one.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Blaine did much in helping the President pick out his cabinet and Mrs. Blaine seems to have done her part also as shown in one of her letters to her daughter. "Your father and I have picked out Garfield's cabinet for him, and have devoted to him for two mornings our waking, but not risen, hours."<sup>25</sup>

The President seemed to have leaned heavily upon Mr. Blaine for advice. That he had confidence in him

<sup>23</sup> Dawes, op. cit., p. 342

<sup>24</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 376

<sup>25</sup> Gamaliel Bradford, The Wife of the Plumed Knight, Harper's Monthly Review, (New York, 1925) CLI p. 166

is shown by his consulting him often and then following his advice.

After Mr. Blaine became Secretary of State, it appears that he intended to carry out his intention of treating the Stalwarts in so friendly a manner that he could win their friendship for he volunteered to speak of the New York situation and that Mr. Conkling had three terms as Senator and he and his friends would be considered fairly in the appointments that might be made in the State. Mr. George S. Bantwell brought this fact to Mr. Conkling's attention who said: "'Do you believe a word of that?' I said, 'yes, I believe Mr. Blaine.' He said with emphasis, 'I don't!'"<sup>26</sup>

It is usually stated that the storm which Mr. Conkling brought against President Garfield, was caused because the President removed C. A. Merrit, a Stalwart incumbent, and personal friend of Mr. Conkling from the collectorship of the post of New York without allowing him to finish his term of service and making a place for William H. Robertson because he had bolted with nineteen others at Chicago to give him the nomination.

The truth of the matter is that this was the one thing that Mr. Conkling could use for ground for fighting him.

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<sup>26</sup> George S. Bantwell, Blaine and Conkling and the Republican Convention of 1880, McClures, (New York, January, 1900) XIV-p. 286

Mr. Conkling went to visit the President-elect in his home at Mentor and discuss the Cabinet,---and the interests of New York, in answer to an invitation from Mr. Garfield.

During the conversation he told Mr. Conkling he could not appoint Levi P. Morton as Secretary of the Treasury, and that General Folger was a man who drank whiskey instead of tea, and in other ways was not a man of good character. Mr. Conkling gave him to understand that New York would not accept any department other than the treasury. To this Garfield invited him to tea instead of answering his demands. After this visit Mr. Garfield called General Folger and offered him the post of Attorney-General which he positively declined.

He next offered to Levi P. Morton the Secretary of the Navy as a post Mr. Conkling had informed him New York did not want. This Mr. Morton accepted because he was anxious for recognition. But after Mr. Arthur and John H. Strain got him out of bed, (he had a chill,) and to Mr. Conkling's quarters, they gave him a sound lecture. The Vice President gave him to understand that his move was ruinous to the New York Republican party and after Mr. Conkling had finished he had changed his mind and on further reflection he thought best to decline.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> T. B. Connery, Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy, Cosmopolitan, (New York, June 1897) XXIII, pp. 150-153

Yet the President sent him as envoy extraordinary to France. Mr. Conkling felt that he should have the right to pass out the jobs in New York because he had finally come out of his sulk and helped win the election. To compromise, he would not hear. He did not want the jobs divided between Mr. Robertson's followers and his. He wanted nothing to do with him because he had not followed his instructions at the Convention. So bitter did he grow that his friendship cooled toward Mr. Morton because he took the post in France even if he had given up a place in the Cabinet for him.

President Garfield would not agree to throw Robertson's group over-board because they had helped give him the nomination.

A declaration of war, if not as formal and high-sounding, yet as positive and unrelenting as ever opened upon actual hostilities between belligerent Nations followed immediately upon the sending of the New York Nominations to the Senate.<sup>28</sup>

Mr. Conkling felt that all this was the work of his enemy, Mr. Blaine, to humiliate him and the hatred for Mr. Blaine deepened, though it is doubtful whether Mr. Blaine had anything to do with the appointment of Mr. Robertson. Mr. Bentwell says that he did not know of it until after the President had selected him. Further, the President said as reported by Mr. Jewell, "Mr. Blaine heard of the nomination and he came in very pale and much astonished. From Mr. Blaine I received

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<sup>28</sup> Dawes, op. cit., pp. 342-343



the specific statement that he had no knowledge of the nomination of Judge Robertson until it had been made."<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Bantwell felt it was an instance of President Garfield's "impudence and unreasoning submission to an expressed public opinion."<sup>30</sup>

The way a thing looks from the outside is often far from right as was the case of Mr. Bantwell's opinion as is brought out in the article of T. B. Connery on the "Secret History of the Garfield-Conkling Tragedy."<sup>31</sup>

When Mr. Conkling decided to put the pressure on the President and make him turn the control of New York appointments over to him or else wage war against him, he called Mr. Connery, who was acting editor of the New York Herald at that time, to Washington for a conference. Mr. Connery very reluctantly went, for he was well acquainted with Mr. Conkling and his methods as well as the manner in which he always took it when any one refused to do his bidding, but after a time he went to Washington, then to the lodgings of Mr. Conkling and Vice-President Arthur who was staying with Mr. Conkling. When he arrived Mr. Conkling was out, for which Mr. Connery was thankful, and he at once pumped Mr. Arthur to find why he had been called. He learned that Mr. Conk-

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<sup>29</sup> Bantwell, op. cit., p. 286

<sup>30</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Connery, op. cit., pp. 150-153

ling was ready, after all honorable means had failed, to lay before the public the whole case of the dealing about the New York patronage.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Arthur then told how the President had not been honorable nor truthful with Mr. Conkling and under the influence of his Secretary of State he had weakly broken his pledges and now was ready to break with Mr. Conkling and humble him--- then conciliate him.

Mr. Connery then wanted to know what he had to do with it. To this Mr. Arthur replied:

'Where you come in is just here' he said. 'Conkling would hesitate to begin the war without good assurance of the 'Herald's' support. Mr. Bennett [the proprietor of the Herald who was in Europe, Asia or Africa at that time] is the Senator's friend, but he is out of the country, and you being his representative, it is necessary to consult you. Can you and will you pledge the 'Herald's' support? That is what Mr. Conkling wishes to learn from your own lips.'<sup>33</sup>

The situation was hard; he hated to enter upon the scheme without Mr. Bennett's consent but he did not know where to find him and if he refused Mr. Conkling would be his enemy for life. A little later Mr. Conkling came in and was much surprised that Mr. Connery had not agreed to the idea at once. Mr. Conkling reminded him of a promise by Mr. Bennett and one from him that they would support him. Of course they had no idea of an open war being brought against the President.

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<sup>32</sup> Connery, op. cit., p. 146

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 147

Slowly Mr. Conkling began to work himself up to a high pitch. He paced the floor as he walked, expounding the grievances until he was speaking as to a crowded hall often stopping with eyes flashing scorn, point his finger in the face of his guest as he made some point against Mr. Blaine and his friends, pouring forth sarcastic words in a perfect flood.<sup>34</sup>

He had contempt for the President and Mr. Robertson but in comparison with Mr. Blaine they were only minor offenders. In his judgment it was through his influence that President Garfield had appointed Mr. Robertson and brought the attack against the Stalwarts. Had not Mr. Blaine influenced the President to assure Whitlow Reid even before the inauguration, that

'the men who had made his nomination possible' would be taken care of and get their reward? 'Reward! Reward!' shouted Conkling scornfully; 'reward, sir, for treacherously betraying a sacred trust.'<sup>35</sup>

He dwelt at length upon the disgrace of the President in rewarding these cowards who had betrayed him and the Stalwart faction of the New York Republican party. Reward for treachery!

It seems reasonable that a man would not sacrifice his friends just because one who was not a friend had helped him once and then ask him to do so for that one's advantage, yet Mr. Conkling felt he should. The

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid p. 148

<sup>35</sup> Ibid p. 149

only thing that came near touching reason, even though over drawn, is summed up in his following words:

'How willing Garfield then was' Conkling sarcastically declared, 'when everything looked blue and certain defeat seemed to stare him in the face; how willing he was to concede anything and everything to the Stalwarts if they would only rush to the rescue and save the day!'<sup>56</sup>

According to Mr. Bantwell, President Garfield gave in twice and each time was led to take things contrary to Mr. Conkling, once through the efforts of Mr. Blaine and once by Mr. Conkling's actions.

A day or so before President Garfield sent Mr. Robertson's name to the senate, Postmaster-General James had managed to get Mr. Conkling and the President together to settle the giving out of jobs in New York satisfactorily to both Half Breeds and Stalwarts.

During the discussion, Mr. Conkling felt that Mr. Robertson could hold down the post of district attorney of New York if he had a good assistant but that the post of collector of internal revenue should not be changed just now.

The President should take no steps without first consulting him. Mr. Garfield then stated that he wanted to get things settled satisfactorily to all parties, and for him to confer with Senator Platt and the Vice-President and prepare a plan that would be fair to the independents or Half-Breeds as well as the Republican

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 150

members as a whole in New York and he (Garfield) would get things settled. Mr. Conkling left with high spirits and all looked well.

But when Mr. Blaine heard of this, he left his sick bed and protested to the President and was able to change his mind. Two days later a bombshell was thrown into the ranks of the Stalwarts when Mr. Robertson's name was sent to the senate for the collectorship. Set back for a moment by surprise, Mr. Conkling came to life but not before he could lay plans for a strong fight.

On getting the document nominating Mr. Robertson, Mr. Pratt claims, contrary to most reports, that he went to Mr. Conkling and told him that he was resigning that very night but Mr. Conkling thought best not to do so until they put up a fight.<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Conkling, knowing it was for him a battle for life in the New York party, brought all the forces he could through Vice-President Arthur, Senator Pratt and many others. They made things so hot that there was danger of a split in the party.<sup>38</sup>

To try to put a stop to this, the senate formed a committee to reconcile the two groups with Mr. Dawes as Chairman, at the suggestion of Mr. Conkling. Mr. Conk-

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<sup>37</sup> Pratt, op. cit., p. 516

<sup>38</sup> Connery, op. cit., p. 154

ling appeared before the committee and in a very lengthy speech recounted all the wrongs he and his division of the party had received and insisted upon drastic measures to remedy the evil by extermination of the hostile faction of New York as the only cure. He was seen in one of his orations, bringing to play all of his powers to influence the committee. Mr. Dawes says:

But I had never heard anything which equalled his efforts for flight of oratorical power---genuine eloquence, bitter denunciation, ridicule of the despised faction in New York, and contempt for its leader. He continued for two hours and a half to play with consummate skill upon all strings known to the orator.<sup>39</sup>

But with all this he could not move them as he wished. When he was closing he took an air of one who had the power to break the party in New York and crush President Garfield if he had to. He stated in closing

I trust that the exigency may never arise when I shall be compelled to choose between self-respect and personal honor on the one side and a discomfiture of that party on the other; but if that time shall ever come, I shall not hesitate in the choice, and I now say to you, and through you to those whom it most concerns, that I have in my pocket an autograph letter of this President who is now for the time being its official head which I pray to God I may never be compelled in self-defense to make public; but if that time shall ever come, I declare to you, his friends, he will bite the dust.<sup>40</sup>

This last statement created so much concern that the

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<sup>39</sup> Dawes op. cit., p. 343

<sup>40</sup> Dawes loc. cit.

committee determined to get hold of the letter which seemed to hold the President in Mr. Conkling's power and thus free him.

Mr. Dawes made a chance meeting with the President and started to find out if he knew about the letter Mr. Conkling had, and to his surprise he did and had a copy of it which he handed over for Mr. Dawes to read. It turned out to be a letter that had been sent to clerks and officials of the Government asking them to help out the campaign fund.

Mr. Dawes asked President Garfield to publish the letter and thus take it away from Mr. Conkling, for its being unpublished was giving Mr. Conkling a chance to make much out of it. But Mr. Blaine advised differently and it was not published until later when Mr. Conkling tried to use it but without success.

President Garfield came before the committee and told them he intended to treat the Robertson group fair and the others could do what they pleased. It would not matter; he was going to follow the cause he felt was right. The efforts of the committee failed to settle the trouble.<sup>41</sup>

All this pressure had its effect upon the President and through the efforts of Postmaster-General Thomas L. James, who was trying to be a peace maker, Mr. Garfield had promised to withdraw Mr. Robertson's name, give him

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<sup>41</sup> Dawes op. cit., p. 344

the district attorney or a foreign appointment. This was hard for the President to do, his pride had been trampled already and this would look as if he was giving in to an arrogant enemy (Conkling) and a polite senate, but his desire for peace and harmony was great. He sent word that if the other parties would shift their men so Mr. Robertson could have the district attorney's office that he would turn the important New York Custom post over to their man for the sake of peace and harmony.

This was arranged and the President sent word that he would like for Mr. Conkling, Vice-President Arthur and their friends to come to the White House and come to a formal agreement.

They decided to do this at once and pay their respect to the President as he had promised he was ready to do what was within his power to stop the controversy. They were ready to go that very night, and every one, including Mr. Conkling was in a happy frame of mind.

All were ready to go to the White house. Mr. Conkling was putting on his overcoat. All looked well for a calm upon the long troubled water, when a message arrived in cipher which Mr. Conkling took his code and worked out. His pleasant spirit faded to one of anger, he crushed the message in his hand and stated: "Gentlemen, I won't go. I am no place-hunter and I won't go."

He gave no explanation of what it contained or why



the sudden change nor could he be shaken from his decision. It seemed strange that no more than what was in the message could cause him to do this, for later it was found to be a message from Governor Cornell of New York asking him to drop the opposition to Mr. Robertson for the sake of harmony.

Mr. James had to go alone to the White House and tell the President about Mr. Conkling's change of mind without knowing any explanation of why.

Mr. Garfield made up his mind he had offered to Mr. Conkling all he was going to and would make no more efforts to please or compromise with him stating:

I must remember that I am President of the United States. I owe something to the dignity of my office and to my own self-respect, and you may say to this senator that now, rather than withdraw Robertson's nomination, I will suffer myself to be dragged by wild horses.<sup>42</sup>

Standing upon his statement he sent Mr. Robertson's name to the senate which led to resignation of the New York senators, Mr. Conkling and Mr. Pratt. This did not change the President's mind and even the attack made on him by the New York Herald, as promised by Mr. Connery, did not change him.

Mr. Conkling and Mr. Platt tried for re-election to the senate to show that the Republicans of New York approved of their opposition to the President.

When many of the backers of Mr. Conkling and even those in his machine he had controlled saw that he was

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<sup>42</sup> Connery op. cit., p. 156

not any longer able to control from Washington, turned against him or would not back him. Mr. Conkling had crushed so many opponents and made them "like it." Thus, when they saw a chance to right part of the insults, many of them turned against him even the Herald stopped backing him on account of a higher power stepping in which caused Mr. Connery to change his stand. It soon became apparent that he could not win the senatorship as he had hoped, yet he held the delegates of New York in session month after month trying to obtain it.

His old fight with Mr. Blaine was looking too good for his enemy and there was little he could do but hope to go back to the senate to take up the fight and wait for another turn.

In the battle for his political existence, the Republican party became two separate branches now hostile to one another, the Stalwarts against the Half-Breeds.

The Half-Breeds had taken the field at Washington and General Blaine had things so well in hand that he had almost repaid all the telling victories won in the long controversy by Mr. Conkling.

Out of the back ranks of the Stalwarts moved a man unknown and almost unheard of, determined to change things to favor the Stalwarts at all cost. He was Charles A. Guiteau, in some ways abnormal. He was egotistical, restless, and had a desire for publicity.

He carried with him a copy of the New York Herald which contained a severe criticism of President Garfield for his double dealing with Mr. Conkling.<sup>43</sup> He brooded over this and finally a very brilliant idea came to him. Why not get Mr. Garfield out of the way and then Mr. Arthur, a Stalwart and close friend of Mr. Conkling, would be president. He (Mr. Guiteau) was to be a hero and would be pardoned and given a job.

As bitter as the battle had become it is not hard to see how this came to his mind. Once he tried to shoot the President but lost his nerve. But in a railroad station he carried out his plan. At the first shot the President stumbled, then he took another shot at him and Mr. Garfield fell.

After the shooting the poor wretch cried: "I did it and I want to be arrested. I am a Stalwart and Arthur is President now. I have a letter here that I want you to give to General Sherman. It will explain everything."

The letter read: "I have just shot the President. I shot him several times, as I wished him to go as easily as possible. His death was a political necessity. I am a lawyer, a theologian and a politician. I am a Stalwart of Stalwarts."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Theodore Claud Smith, James Abram Garfield Life and Letters (New Haven, 1925) II p. 1184; Connery, op. cit., p. 143

<sup>44</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 1184

The President lingered for a few weeks and passed away.

The Controversy took a new turn, a Stalwart was now at the control and many felt that Mr. Conkling would soon be the power behind the chair although he had lost in New York. But President Arthur had his own political chance well in mind, the old struggle had become very unpalatable to him, and Mr. Conkling in many ways was a hard friend. So he let it be known that he had dropped his Stalwartism. Mr. Conkling once more sulked and did not conceal his vexations.<sup>45</sup>

To appease him Mr. Arthur offered him a position as associate justice or as some thought he was offered this as a recognition of service to the party, as well as for the numerous favors he had given Mr. Arthur.<sup>46</sup> This was turned down and Mr. Conkling moved into retirement politically and never again entered publicly into politics.

Mr. Blaine sent in his resignation and President Arthur refused to accept it. There seemed to be no disagreement between them, yet Mr. Blaine again sent in his resignation and was relieved of his post.

The tragedy seemed to have sobered the two men for they never openly clashed with each other. It is doubt-

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<sup>45</sup> Russel, op. cit., p. 387

<sup>46</sup> Isaac Smithson Hartley, "Roscoe Conkling. His Home in Utica." Magazine of American History (New York, August, 1888) XX p. 99

ful if they could have done much more than drop it for the party was sick of the controversy, most of them could see it had caused the death of President Garfield, not that Mr. Conkling had any direct part in it. But the split in the party, the hatred that spread, and the bitter words hurled did place in the abnormal mind of Guiteau the plan to destroy, in order to obtain victory for the Stalwarts.<sup>47</sup>

But to say that Mr. Conkling had dropped it in his mind or that he did intend to quit the long struggle is not correct.

When the time came to select the man to run in 1884 the Republicans passed President Arthur by. Had he not been opposed to President Garfield until the tragedy? Had he not been a Stalwart opposed to Mr. Blaine? Yes, he had dropped his Stalwartism and in many ways fooled most of them as an Administrator, but that had caused the Stalwarts to look upon him as a traitor, thus his chance for winning was very small.

In the minds of most of the Republicans there was only one who would do, James C. Blaine of Maine, that had waited long enough for his nomination.

Mr. Blaine was now growing old and in many ways he could see it did not pay to be ready, always to battle

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<sup>47</sup> Harry Pratt Judson, "American Politics: a study of four careers. (Blaine, Lamar, Hayes, Butler)" Review of Reviews (New York, 1896) VII p. 164

his old enemy. Sobered by many disappointments and the death of Mr. Garfield he took stock of his chance to win if nominated and knew too well that his fate lay in Mr. Conkling's hands as New York would be the deciding state.

Just before the convention at Chicago in 1884, he called Murat Halstead to try to get him not to work for his nomination, when Mr. Halstead seemed surprised and refused. He told him:

The objection to my nomination is that I cannot be elected. With the South solid against us we cannot succeed without New York, and I cannot carry that state. There are factions there and influences before voting and after voting, such that the party cannot count upon success with me. I am sure of it--I have thought it all over and my deliberate judgment is as I tell you.<sup>48</sup>

They felt he was a bit timid and afraid he would cause a party split, but even his old enemy, Mr. Platt, left New York determined Mr. Blaine was the man and told Mr. Conkling so which gave him great surprise.

Mr. Pratt stayed with his intentions because their friends insisted upon him supporting Mr. Blaine. This caused Mr. Conkling to break with Mr. Pratt and he never forgot it.<sup>49</sup>

One of the strongest, hottest campaigns in our history took place between Mr. Blaine and Grover Cleveland, Governor of New York. With the solid south as a football

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<sup>48</sup> Murat Halstead, "The Defeat of Blaine for the Presidency." McClures (New York, January 1896) VI p.161

<sup>49</sup> Pratt, op. cit., p. 518

the Democrats used every weapon they could find and so did the Republicans. Every scandal that could be found was published, and of course, Mr. Blaine had to face the railroad scandal and the Mulligan letters. Mr. Blaine was right, New York was the state that would decide the election.

Just how much Mr. Conkling did to defeat Mr. Blaine in 1884 is not known. In writing of Mr. Conkling's past, in the election of 1884 Alfred Conkling states without mentioning Mr. Blaine's name that Mr. Conkling had been accused of actively helping the Democrats and refused to answer the question publicly but did state to a friend that he had been ousted from the party roughly and he had refused to take any part in the campaign.<sup>50</sup> Whether or not he had an active part, his refusal to be for Mr. Blaine had its influence, for in Mr. Conkling's own county of Oneida enough Republicans changed over to the Democrats (two-thousand) to have given Mr. Blaine the Presidency, for Governor Cleveland only carried New York by 1040 votes.<sup>51</sup>

David S. Murry thinks there is good evidence that Mr. Conkling worked for Mr. Blaine's defeat. When asked to help Mr. Blaine he said: "No, thank you, I do not engage in criminal practice." He also sent anony-

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<sup>50</sup> Conkling, op. cit., p. 648

<sup>51</sup> Russell, op. cit., p. 403; Halstead, op. cit., gives it 1047. p. 163

nous letters to the New York World attacking Mr. Blaine.<sup>52</sup>

And there are reports of frauds in that small a plurality

and John Y. McKane was ten years afterwards convicted of frauds that perpetrated as he willed, that amounted to thousands. There was a fraud capacity in the machine of many times the plurality by which Blaine was defeated and there never was a rational doubt that it was exerted."<sup>53</sup>

The long, bitter controversy had staged its last round with little glory or victory for either and at least Mr. Blaine had paid with the Presidency for the joy of dealing out an ever dose of sarcasm to the sarcasm expert. The two leaders of the Republican party fought like dogs to keep each other from getting any meat and stopped only to find it devoured by others. The Republican party had been weakened by the division and the Democrats had profited by the long fight.

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<sup>52</sup> Muzzy op. cit., p. 207

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