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THE SEAT OF THE WAR IN SOUTH AMERICA.

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THE thrifty little Republic of Chili is not altogether free from the world-wide epidemic of national aggrandizement—a disease which reduces the body politic to a very deplorable degree, and is cured only by copious blood and treasure letting. Not long ago war with that most thriftless of all States—the Argentine Republic—seemed imminent, because she would not admit the claim that Chili made to Patagonia. Now war has actually broken out with Bolivia, and the *casus belli* again is a boundary question. In this instance, however, Chili has been reluctantly compelled to resort to the arbitrament of arms.

So exceedingly ambiguous is the description in the Chilian constitution of the limits of her territory, that there is ample ground for controversy with her neighbours. The first Article of the Constitution reads—'The territory of Chili extends from the Desert of Atacama to Cape Horn, and from the Cordillera of the Andes to the Pacific Ocean, comprising the Archipelago of Chiloe, all the adjacent islands, and the San Juan Fernandez group.' The

description is taken from the old colonial register, the *Audiencia e Chancelleria real de Santiago de Chile*, and defined accurately enough the isolation of Spain's poorest dependency, hemmed in by a desert, a mountain chain, and the sea. And it also answered well enough to distinguish Chili from the other members of Bolivia's contemplated confederation of free States, any one of which, in the first flush of brotherly love, would have deemed it ignoble to haggle about a strip of territory, even if it had been accounted of any value. But circumstances speedily changed. It was soon discovered that independence and uniformity of political institutions did not eradicate jealousy or curb national ambition; and in course of time, from the Atacama desert—rather a wide boundary line, then supposed to be valueless—has been uncovered one treasure after another, till it is no wonder if the ingenuity of the best of neighbours should be stimulated to find fresh excuses for aggression.

The Constitution assigns to Chili the western slope of the Andes as far