

SAMUEL SULLIVAN COX



SAMUEL SULLIVAN COX, an American congressman and diplomat, was born at Zanesville, O., Sept. 30, 1824, and died at New York, Sept. 10, 1889. Educated at Ohio State University and Brown University, he studied and practiced law, and in 1853 became editor of the "Statesman," a journal published in Columbus, O. After serving for a year as secretary of legation at Lima, Peru, he entered Congress from Ohio in 1857, serving there continuously until March, 1865. During this period he supported the policy of the administration in voting supplies and men to carry on the war for the Union, but frequently criticized its course in other matters. He removed to New York and in 1868 again entered Congress, this time as representative from New York. Here he retained his seat for twelve years. He introduced and secured the passage of the bill creating the life-saving service, and also brought forward the bill for increasing the pay of the letter carriers, who in after years erected a bronze statue of their benefactor in New York city. In 1885, he was minister for two years to Turkey, and subsequently served another term in Congress as representative. Mr. Cox, or as he was playfully called "Sunset" Cox, was a popular as well as effective speaker, and won considerable reputation as a humorist. He travelled much and wrote also concerning his travels. His published works embrace: "The Buckeye Abroad" (1851); "Puritanism in Politics" (1863); "Eight Years in Congress" (1865); "A Search for Winter Sunbeams" (1870); "Why We Laugh" (1876); "Free Land and Free Trade" (1876); "Arctic Sunbeams" (1882); "Orient Sunbeams" (1882); "Memorial Eulogies" (1883); "Three Decades of Federal Legislation" (1885); "A Diplomat in Turkey" (1887); "The Isles of the Princes" (1887); and "The Four New States" (1889).

THE BEAUTIES OF DIPLOMACY

FROM SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
FEBRUARY 9, 1876

NOW, gentlemen, I will go to Greece although there is hardly a grease spot left! However there is something very interesting in connection with Greece which I would like to refer to. I do not think it has been exhausted altogether. The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. Springer] anticipated me a little as I was the first man to

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find out the interesting letters which he has quoted. My friend, Judge Holman, also anticipated me but he did not find, read, nor comment on the most interesting epistles. Here is one:

Legation of the United States,
Athens, March 8, 1875.
(Received April 5.)

Sir.—A magnificent ball took place at the palace on the 3d instant. On that occasion the American minister had the honor to be selected to lead a contra-dance with the queen.

Now that is something that I like. It makes me wish to defend in one sense the minister to Greece. I will defend anybody that has been so abused as this minister. Why what do we not owe to Greece? Think of it! The land where "burning Sappho loved and sung," and all the rest of Byron's fine ode, which you, Mr. Chairman, rehearsed in your boyhood. Think of Athens—the eye of Greece and the Piræus which has been called the "eyesore of Greece." Think of the arts of war and peace which Greece illustrated two thousand years ago! Think of Marathon and Salamis, and the "ships by thousands" which used to lay below, but which do not lay around there at all now, especially with our starry flag at their mast!

Think of Thermopylæ and her three hundred, of the Pyrrhic phalanx and Anacreon, Suli's rock and Sunium's marbled steep; and then, swan-like, die for love of Greece, after Byron's draught of Samian wine! Think of the Acropolis. Think of those old heroes that modern Greeks name their children after—Æschylus, Thersites, Agamemnon, and Ulysses—never forget Ulysses,—Epaminondas, and Pericles, and Sophocles, and Alcibiades, and Themistocles, and Euripides, and all the other D D's belonging to the early days of ancient Greece.

Yet, sir, as my friend from Indiana [Mr. Holman] well

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said, our representatives, when they go to Greece go to the tomb of departed greatness. Greece gave art, science, logic, and poetry to the ages. She is entitled to a minister from the United States of America, not on account of any special living people that are there, or any special commerce which they have with us, for they only send us, I believe, from two to ten thousand pounds of Zante currants every year; but Greece has a nomadic population of goat-herds, and we ought to improve on a certain kind of goat that we have in this country.

Is there here any man who will not assist us to protect and raise Greece to her ancient fame? Let him read Clay and Webster, if not Plato and Aristotle. Let him read the catalogue of the Homeric heroes! True, her streams are dried up, her soil barren, her olive-trees cut up by the roots for fuel, and her very grass made the food of her nomadic goats; but is it not Greece? Some cynic may ask before voting appropriations for our minister, who honors the dead past and the great heroes of that dead past, "What is Cithera's isle to the grasshopper-despoiled West? What is Milos, from whence the famous statue of Venus came, or Salamis with the fame of Themistocles, when Mississippi is under the ban and its plantations are overgrown with sedge-grass? What the Piræus, where Socrates questioned the sailors, or what the academy under whose olive-trees the divine Plato sat while the bees of Hymettus settled on his lips, when the Texas border is ravaged by greasers and American cattle driven to Cortina's ranches by the thousand?

What are Morea's hills with their golden and purple sunsets, when beyond our sunset, contractors cheat the government and Indians on meat and flour? What the violet-wreathed city of Minerva, when in the great metropolis of

New York, "farther west," the tenement houses teem with skeleton starvelings? Let imagination paint in rainbow colors the verdureless and yellow isles of Greece and sing them again in Byron's muse, but what are these to the demoralized and overflowed bacon of Alabama? When there is sung the glories of Bacchus and the mazy dance of the Bacchantes, who is to tell the mysteries of the crooked juices of the maize of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri?

And if further the same cynic asks why King George of Greece plays with his pet birds while the bandits prowl, plunder, and murder; if it is said that Greece is the land of ruins, brigands, and beggars, and the little kinglet of Schleswig-Holstein is held on his throne by other powers, may we not respond, "It is Greece, the Greece of Aristotle and Homer to which we send expensive ambassadors?"

We ought to go further in our pride and protection for this grave of greatness. We ought to bring out of the ruins of the Acropolis some of those rare works of art that were left by Lord Elgin when he surreptitiously carried off so many to the British museum. I plead as well for art as for the poor inhabitants of Greece. They ought to be in some way or other protected by our minister.

There are many new members here who probably do not know that two years ago we had an executive document, No. 54 of the second session of the Forty-second Congress, sent here by a Colonel Steinberger, who went to what is called the Navigator islands. He was on a special mission from our government. I do not know just what it was for. Perhaps there was a land job in it. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*.¹ But he went out to these islands and there he was soon hand and glove with King Lunalilo. He is now premier. There

¹ Every unknown is regarded as marvellous.

he is now, sitting under the bread-fruit trees, with the little monkey clinging with prehensile grip to their limbs, and he (I do not mean the monkey) wrapped around with the Star Spangled Banner of our country; only seventy-five hundred miles from San Francisco, eight thousand miles from China and four thousand miles from Juan Fernandez! There our banner floats!

O, how proud we were when we knew that our banner was floating over those basaltic rocks, washed by the waves as they rolled over coral reefs, with fishes among them of all kinds and colors! Then to think that away off, where no good man had ever gone, except some of the Botany Bay shipwrecked convicts to convert the natives to our religion, how beautiful it was in this centennial year to feel that General Grant had sent out Colonel Steinberger to bring those islands within our own influence and confederacy! If we can do so much for people who are so far off, why not jump from Samoa sixteen thousand miles to Greece, and there revive through our diplomacy its ancient glories under our centennial tutelage.

In Greece we have a minister whom I like. I do not want to see him dismissed. He is a man that can dance a contradance with the Queen, and such a queen as Queen Olga—a grand duchess of Russia! And Russia may almost be called the leading power of Europe. We should be proud to think of such a minister! How did they dance it?

“Hands across and down the middle
To the tune of flute and fiddle.”

Mr. Chairman, I have seen such promiscuous dancing. Byron referred to the Pyrrhic dances of classic Greece, but that dance is obsolete. I have seen the Kabyles in northern Africa with their strange swaying dances. I have seen some

dancing in the aisles of this House that forcibly reminded me of the dervishes of the East. I have seen some ravishing dancing by the señoritas of Seville.

But, sir, I pause. We have here a gentle professor [Mr. Monroe], at one time a very good professor at Oberlin, and a good man. He is, or was, a very religious man. He is well educated, but did he know when he was speaking for Greece and its minister the other day and quoting its history—did he know that our minister there had been dancing a contradance? Did he know that he was thus desecrating the old religious Presbyterian principles? No, sir, I repudiate such an idea. How can he vote against Greece in this bill?

Sir, the letter which the gentleman from Illinois sent up to be read was not exactly read by the clerk in the proper tones. I proceed to read it through:

“The spacious salons were filled at half-past nine, and the festivities continued until half-past five in the morning. The arrangements throughout were of the most admirable character. An elaborate supper for eight hundred guests was laid in the royal *salle à manger* and in the two large adjoining rooms, while the ministers of state and the diplomatic corps were entertained by the king and queen in the beautiful private apartments of their majesties.”

I would like to know what they had to eat on that festive occasion. What did they drink? Was it champagne or was it Burgundy? Did they have imported from Spain the rare Montillado? Did they have Rudesheimer, or did they have Hochheimer or some other “heimer” from the Rhine? What were they drinking? Was it the Vin D’Asti from Italy or Tokay from Hungary? What was their *menu*? Was it drawn from Apicius or the “mouth officers” of Lucullus? Was it inspired by Brillat Savarin or Delmonico? I think

some man on the Republican side of the House who is interested in retrenchment ought to have the question raised and inquiry made as to what was going on on that occasion in respect to the edibles and drinking; for I hold that the first duty of an American diplomat is to drink nothing but pure old American Bourbon whiskey.

Moreover, the utility of this wonderful diplomatic system which I am now defending, for I think it will prove of great utility, is the right to have inquiry as to the peculiar diplomatic dress our minister wore when he danced with the Queen of Greece.

Did he wear a spike-tailed coat; were his hands covered with graceful kids; were they of the Alexandrine pattern, and was his hair parted in the middle? How was the Queen dressed? How did she manage that white-satin dress so as not to take the color from her cheeks as represented in another interesting dispatch? We want to know all about it; how long was her train; and, if not, why not?

Now, Mr. Chairman, I had the other day a little troublesome matter with my friend from Maine [Mr. Hale], as to which I wish to express my regret. I called him by an endearing epithet, but I felt a little bad about it. I went to the Corcoran Art Gallery on Saturday to relieve myself from this feeling.

I never felt the necessity of keeping a minister at Greece until I walked, thoughtful, silent, among the mutilated plaster casts of the Corcoran Gallery on Saturday. There were orators without lungs, statesmen without brains, soldiers without arms, and Venuses without robes. Here was a torso Demosthenes and a one-eyed Homer; there was a Theseus garrotting a spavined Centaur. The gentleman from Kentucky will understand what a spavined Centaur is. All

about were the fauns, satyrs, Apollos, and Dianas which Greece gave to art and art to the ages: although the only art of modern Greece consists in the ransoming of travellers from brigands, and the farming out of revenues for the sick man of the Levant, and feeding goats. Yet that is a strong reason for a minister to look after art, brigands, and revenue.

If the British Queen—whose empire is based on the wisdom and the rocks of ages, and whose star and course of empire is eastward through her newly acquired Suez canal to her hundreds of millions in India, and whose footsteps of empire are marked at Malta, Corfu, and in the isles of Greece—could not protect her subjects from brigandage and murder within sight of the Acropolis, does it not become our duty, as the mighty limb of her magnificent trunk, to throw our shadow over that sterile soil where Marathon looks on the sea? Is not this our bounden duty this centennial year? Are we not inviting all the nations to our carnival of industry and jubilee of freedom? What would that interesting occasion be without a wooden horse from Greece within thy gates, O city of brotherly love!

Moreover, do we not reach out to other isles than those of Greece and other lands remote? Does not Massachusetts, through an honored son and an ex-member of Congress, give law to the realm of King Kalakaua? Has not our vessel with our proud starry flag borne a Pennsylvanian, Colonel Steinberger, to the distant Samoan group of the southwestern seas, eight thousand miles from our coast, near the tropic of Capricorn? Has he not there eaten of the bread-fruit with the kings of the group and a group of kings, made himself premier over their councils and king of the ex-cannibal islands? If we can do this in the isles of King Lunalilo amid the ancient vesicular lava-beds, amagladaloids, and basalt,

where, over coralline ledges, amid which disport fish banded and spotted with green and crimson, the wild waves are singing our everlasting glory hallelujah; why may we not reach out from Pago-Pago and the slopes of Upolu and Savaii to the land where Homer ruled as his demesne and Sappho sang her sad refrain to the Ægean, into whose bosom she sprang and from whose bosom her favorite deity arose.

If we can use the contingent fund as we have to reach Pago-Pago and its interesting converts to polygamous Christianity why may we not extend an enterprising rule and roving into that land where Pericles ruled, Demosthenes spoke, Sophocles sang, and even Paul preached? Did we not last year to gratify an Ohio member, appropriate thousands for a new survey of Judea? And if so why may not Mars Hill have its geologist and the Morea its photographs?

Gentlemen may tell us that we have no commerce with Greece, and therefore require no minister there. Gentlemen may say that our ships and clippers no longer plow the historic waves rendered classic by the prows of Ulysses and the pinnaces of Agamemnon. True, our ship-building is a myth; but Greece is the land of myths. True, the decadence of our shipping calls for little or no men-of-war; but what an interesting study for our minister are the men-of-war who went out to take Troy forty-five hundred years ago and besought and besieged that city till the young men went west! But is it not a strong reason for the encouragement of our navigation? If we had our olden commerce, there would be no need of its fostering. We must have ancient Greece to teach us the art of navigation and revive our shipping.

REVIVAL OF AMERICAN SHIPPING

[The House having under consideration the bill (H. R. 6937) to authorize the purchase of foreign-built ships by citizens of the United States for use in the foreign carrying trade, Mr. Cox, of New York, said:]

MR. SPEAKER,—In most cases, either of social or physical grievance or disease, the way to reach the remedy is to study the causes so as to remove them. The sickness even unto death of our marine is a partial exception to this mode of treatment. Many of the causes which produced the effect which we deplore have done their worst and have expired as active energies. To their operation have been added new causes which congressional supineness and injurious policies have intensified. So that indeed it may be said that if our navigation and commerce are to be restored the remedy must be as heroic as the case is desperate.

We are progressing somewhat in the search for remedies. We are eliminating delusive proposals, such as subsidies. It is not necessary to discuss subsidies, so called, any more. Subsidy is an obsolete and disgraced system.

While referring to a generous postal service as one of the fair methods of supporting our marine, I do not ask that the Treasury should be an eleemosynary institution for the running of ships. No one of the minority of the committee has proposed to create for our decrepit navigation charity hospitals.

In presenting a petition for a special committee on shipping revival to the Senate in last July the Senator from Maine [Mr. Frye] was at a loss where to send it. "There is no committee that takes the slightest interest in it," he ex-

claimed, "no head of department has jurisdiction over the subject. It is an orphan, without any orphan's court or guardian. It is a waif without a home. It is a tramp to whom nobody is bound to give cold victuals even."

At last it found sheltering arms in the committee whose report is before us. We, at least, give it the benefit of many repealing and a few enacting statutes.

It is beyond doubt that the origin of our navigation laws was a compact with slavery. This David A. Wells has shown most vividly in his volume on the "Mercantile Marine." New England was engaged in shipping and in transporting and selling slaves to the South. She desired to hold the monopoly of that trade. This she procured for a period by the extension of the time for the extinction of the slave-trade to 1808. The compact was completed by the navigation laws of 1790 and 1792. Tonnage dues and imposts gave to the American the entire commerce and prohibited foreign ship-owners from engaging in our trade. Again, in 1816, 1817, and 1820 the odious British navigation laws against which our fathers rebelled were re-enacted by Congress. Every discrimination possible was made against foreigners.

These laws, whose origin is found in the horrors of the middle passage and whose history is a part of the most disgraceful experience of our country, have ceased to protect American shipping.

Although there is an apparent concurrence by all the committee in the bill reported, some of the committee reserved the right to differ. They prefer some modes to others. Besides, it is a question, since the burdens now sought to be removed existed when shipping interests were prosperous, whether their removal will revive those interests.

There is so much contrariety of opinion between those interested that it is a wonder that even an approximation has been made to some partial relief.

Indeed the protection of these laws by the whirligig and revenges of time is given to the foreigner, to the Briton. We drive to him the carrying of our persons and property; load him with largesses of freight and fare, and forbid our own people from enjoying even a share in the hundred and odd millions which our laws transfer out of our produce and producers to the pocket of the foreigner! If this be done to protect our ship-builder it fails; if it be done to protect our ship-owner it fails. The owner if he would build here must do it at a loss of fifteen or thirty per cent. If he would buy, he must buy ships only thus built. Thus builder and owner are burdened by the clinging of this Old Man of the Sea. If we can build as cheap here as abroad we need no protection; if we cannot build as cheap here as abroad, who can afford to buy? The sea is open field, where the guerdon falls to him who can procure his vessel in the best market.

This open competition as to purchase and use of ships of all kinds has changed, or ought to change, the laws which govern our marine. The laws of eighty years ago are not suited to our changed condition. Those laws suited sail, not iron or steam. As soon think of returning to the stage-coach or the footman for land conveyance, or to the skin boat of the Esquimaux, or junk of the Chinese for sea transportation, as to run the ocean fleet of to-day under the ancient laws. Nay, as well think of discarding the new motors of physics and their energies as return even to the wooden paddles of the early Cunarder, with its petty 1,200 tonnage and its little subsidy.

Thus the very causes which produced our disasters are as

obsolete and inoperative as the slave-trade itself. The very model upon which our navigation laws was moulded has been shattered, and our shipping to-day, with all these restrictions, guards, and prohibitions, is as useless and uninteresting as the "fat weed that rots on Lethe's wharf."

It matters, therefore, little to examine into the causes which produced the decay of our marine. When we see other nations improving their marine by liberal policies while our government has neglected to adopt them, the solution is easy. As well expect the boor of Russia, with his old modes of farming his wheat, to compete with the American farmer with his new implements of labor and time-saving, as the United States rival Germany and England in shipping without the marine instrumentalities which these nations employ.

Another and kindred reason for the loss of our carrying trade and the failure to restore it, is that other countries have laid hands on that which slipped from us in our preoccupation during the civil war. For others, vessels are now at work; for others, vessels are being built on the best models. The seamen, the skill, the capital, and the enterprise of others hold the lines of sea adventure. Possession, with its concomitant advantages, is not ours. We have to struggle valiantly for what others have already.

So that, Mr. Speaker, to remove this mountain in our path we must remodel the whole industrial system of our own half-hemisphere, and we must turn and overturn natural laws of supply and demand in other spheres of labor and locality. This being impossible, what remains for us except tentative legislation, the repeal of burdens on navigation here, of a liability on a ship-owner there, a reasonable compensation for mails, in many directions; and as the best

thing, in the judgment of our wisest economists and merchants, freedom for all stores and materials and liberty to purchase vessels wherever we please to buy.

If these remedies fail, then the country must await some catastrophe in the shape of a great foreign war, which, like the Crimean, calls our marine into being and activity; but even then we must have the right to buy freely, else it will be useless to regard the opportunity. Or perhaps some exceptional progress may be made in the building of ships or the motive power of its enginery. This may give us a fresh start and added momentum, such as England received in her iron-ship building. . . .

The relief, whatever it is, must come as well to the ship-using as to the ship-building interest. Even if we remove all the burdens upon the use of ships it will avail nothing so long as the ships cannot be bought or made as cheaply at home as abroad.

If, therefore, our tariff laws will not allow us to build or our navigation laws to buy, of what use is the bill of the majority? What is the necessity of taking burdens from the running of vessels which we have not and can not buy or build?

Hence the minority report explicitly says that—

"While the committee are generally agreed upon the measures proposed the minority are constrained to notice the fact that the most vital and prominent relief, by the freedom of materials for ships from custom dues and the right to purchase ships abroad is utterly ignored in the majority report. In the opinion of the minority nothing could be more futile, not to say absurd, than to deal with a vital disease by remedies which only affect the superficial ailments whose removal would leave the patient in as dangerous a plight as ever."