

the south, and that the parties there would be reformed on national lines. It was this belief that united the 306 at Chicago. It was the feeling that the war was over, that the day had come when all sectionalism should be obliterated, and that Grant was the only candidate by which this end could be attained."

"Was there any time during that convention, Senator," I asked "when General Grant could have been nominated?"

"Yes, I think so," was the reply. "Had certain events occurred just five minutes sooner nothing could have prevented it. What those things were, I do not wish to say, as the men most closely connected with them are still living, and it would not be fair to them."

"How about Blaine's chances of nomination, Senator? You were at the Cincinnati convention of 1876, where he came so near getting the nomination that afterward went to Hayes."

"Blaine would have been the choice of that convention," said Senator Cameron, "had his friends trusted the Pennsylvania delegation. When we met in state convention the unit rule was adopted and the delegation was instructed to vote for Hartranft. When we got to Cincinnati, however, through the influence of Mr. McPherson and Blaine's friends, this instruction was set aside and the different delegates were permitted to vote as they pleased. Blaine had a majority of the members of the delegation and had this not been done the vote of the state as a whole would have gone to him after the first few ballots. As it was, however, the unit rule was set aside and the friends of Blaine rather offensively gave the Pennsylvania delegation to understand that they could nominate their candidate without its aid. This angered some of the delegates and it was on this account that, in announcing the change of vote, I gave out the number of the Hayes votes first. The announcement was made at a time when it required only a hair to turn the tide in the favor of Blaine or Hayes. A rush followed the announcement and Hayes became the candidate. There were more Blaine delegates than Hayes in our delegation, and had I announced the Blaine votes first I have not much doubt but that the rush would have been for him and he would have been the candidate."

"Have you ever had any ambition to be President, Senator?" I asked.

"No," was the reply, "I have not. It is a great office, but the duties are arduous and the responsibilities are great."

"Senator Cameron, you have been in the Senate nearly twenty years. You have had a good chance to judge of its efficiency. Do you think Congress is a good medium of legislation? Do the people get what they want out of it?"

"I think so," replied Senator Cameron. "It is a little slow, perhaps, but it gets there after a time. Congress is better than people suppose it to be. Some of the best work done by the body does not get into the newspapers. The business of Congress is not done on the floor of the House and Senate, but in the committee rooms. We are more and more nearing the day when the best of our government work must be done by business brains—by thinking rather than by speechmaking. The great men of Congress, in the eyes of the people, are those who can ably discuss points of

order, who can spend hours in telling why a bill should be brought in through the right wing of the Capitol, rather than through the left wing, and not as to the value of the bill itself. The questions of the day are practical questions and they require thought rather than speeches. We want to know how our commerce may be increased and how our financial and material condition may be bettered rather than to show how loud the American eagle screams or to boast of the vast extent of country covered by his pinions."

"Speaking of American commerce, Senator, what do you think would be the best way to increase it?"

"I favor the French system," replied Senator Cameron. "I would have the government pay a bounty, both for the building and the running of American vessels, so much a ton for their construction and so much a mile for every ton transported. All vessels so favored would have to be built in America and manned by American seamen. They would be subject to the control of the navy in time of war, and they would be built after such plans that they would be of great assistance to our naval forces."

"But would this plan largely increase our shipping?"

"Certainly, it would," was the reply. "It would cause the investment of millions of dollars worth of capital in American ships. Our ships so favored could underbid the ships of Great Britain and other countries as to our carrying trade, and the result would be a fleet of American merchant ships equal to that possessed by any nation of the world. Such ships would furnish cheaper transportation for all parts of the country. Ships would be built on the Pacific coast to engage in trade with Asia. There would be cotton ships built on the Gulf of Mexico, and the millions of dollars which we pay in freight charges to the English would go into the pockets of the American people."

"How much do we pay England in freight charges?" I asked.

"I think the amount is nearly \$200,000,000 a year."

"Do the English pay much in subsidies to their ships?"

"Yes, England was paying some time ago nearly \$4,000,000 a year in bounties to its merchant marine. Italy pays about \$3,000,000 a year. France has been paying more than \$7,000,000 a year to French ships sailing under the French flag, and according to figures which I made when I investigated the subject not long ago, the nations of Europe pay the enormous sum of \$25,000,000 every year in subsidies to their shipping."

"Speaking of the navy, Senator, it was through your bill that the first fast cruisers were built?"

"Yes," replied Senator Cameron, "I introduced that bill during the first term of President Cleveland. I saw that the only way to get the people to take an interest in the navy was to show them we could have the fastest and the best warships in the world. We are, you know, naturally very proud. We want the fastest horses, the fastest yachts and the biggest things of all kinds in the world. I was talking one day with Mr. Cramp, the owner of the ship yards at Philadelphia, and I asked him if he could build a faster cruiser than any yet constructed. He replied that he could. He said he had just built for Jay Gould of

New York and Mr. Harkness of Cleveland the two fastest steam yachts of the world. These were the *Atalanta* and the *Peerless*. He had done this because Gould and Harkness were willing to pay for them, and he said that if our government would offer the proper inducements he could make warships which would outsteam anything afloat. The fastest warship then was the *Esmeralda*. It had been built in England for the Spaniards and it could make eighteen knots an hour. I asked him if he could beat this. He replied that he could and that he would contract to make a ship which would go at least twenty knots an hour.

"Mr. Whitney was then Secretary of the Navy. The matter was presented to him, and a bill was gotten up with the advice of the Navy Department, through which the first fast cruisers were built. The naval authorities thought that twenty knots an hour was an impossibility, and they made the minimum only nineteen knots, and gave the builders a bonus of from one to two hundred thousand dollars for each knot above this. The first cruiser built made twenty and one-half knots an hour. We have today the fastest warships of the world, and we can build as good ships as any other nation."

"Will not the navy be steadily increased from now on?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Senator Cameron. "I think so. I believe that we will at once begin to spend a large amount of money for a navy and coast defenses. The people see the necessity of them, and they will not be content with their present means of protection."

"Do you think we will have war?"

"Not now, and it may not be for a long time in the future. We are a people of independent spirit and are quick to resent injuries. With this increase of the navy and the increase in our military forces, this spirit will grow, and out of it, through some little thing, may come one of the great wars of the future. This is, however, only conjecture. I do not believe in borrowing trouble. Still I think we ought to be prepared for trouble if it should come upon us unawares."

"What do you think of our relations with South America? Will we ever control the South American trade?"

"I think we ought to," replied Senator Cameron. "We ought to do the largest part of the business of this continent."

"Then you believe in the Monroe doctrine?"

"Most assuredly I do," was the reply. "That doctrine sprang up with our independence, and it should be sacred to us. The nation of Europe which has property on this continent at that time should be permitted to hold it, but there should be no further concessions of territory."

"Do you believe, Senator, in the increase of our boundaries?"

"Not at present," replied Senator Cameron. "I don't think it would be wise. Our country is not yet one-tenth developed. Few of us realize how big the country is. We could support a population from ten to twenty times the size of that which we have now. The United States has some of the richest lands of the globe, and our people will grow in wealth and power as time goes on. I do not believe in spread eagles, but I am wonderfully impressed with the