

KOSZTA

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rights, insult the flag, or imprison and shoot the citizens of other nations . . . such an anomaly as this, it is claimed, does not exist in the civilized world, or, if it does, it ought to exist no longer. It would seem, and it really is so, that the Spanish Court is madly bent upon rushing to ruin."

These sentiments, so far-reaching in their implications, indicated that Pierce and Cushing were for the moment agreed in their "imperialistic" tendencies; and indeed it seemed as if the "manifest destiny" group would carry all before them. Charles Sumner wrote to Theodore Parker:

"The rulers of the country are the President, with Cushing, Davis, and Forney.¹ Nobody else has any influence. These are hot for Cuba and war."

In the cabinet councils, Marcy appeared as an "old fogy"; while Cushing personified to the public the dashing spirit of "young America." Reports of disagreement prompted the rumor, as early as May, 1853, that Marcy, dissatisfied, would retire to the French Mission, leaving Cushing to succeed him in the Department of State. Intimations of this kind were, however, unwarranted, and in the end the differences in temperament were reconciled by the progress of events.

There were some matters, fortunately, on which Marcy and Cushing could have no divergence of opinion. The famous case of Martin Koszta² gave Marcy a welcome

¹ John Weiss Forney (1817-81), an enterprising Philadelphia journalist, became, in 1851, Clerk of the House of Representatives and editor of the *Washington Union*. In this capacity, he was exceedingly influential, and was very close to both Pierce and Cushing.

² Koszta, a native of Hungary, had fled to America, where he had filed notice of his intention to become an American citizen. Later he went to Turkey, where, at Smyrna, he was kidnapped by the Austrian Consul General and put in irons. Commander Ingraham

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opportunity to emulate Lord Palmerston by asserting the dignity of his country, and his "Hülsemann letter" had a ringing tone which thrilled patriotic hearts. Cushing supported Marcy in every detail, commending him highly for enunciating with such clearness our doctrine of "Civis Romanus Sum." // The negotiation of the Gadsden Treaty with Mexico settled a disputed boundary with that nation and established more cordial relations between her and us. By firm and judicious management, we obtained from Denmark for our vessels an exemption from the so-called "sound duties," which every European government was then compelled to pay. Commodore Perry's Treaty with Japan, signed in March, 1854, was promptly and unanimously ratified by the Senate, to Cushing's keen satisfaction. A commercial treaty with Borneo was perfected, and an important agreement with Russia signed, making "Free ships, free men" part of the international law between the two countries. A reciprocity treaty with Canada was pushed through in 1854, giving the United States some valuable fishery concessions. All this was honor enough for a single administration. But it was in our relations with Spain and with Great Britain that the really significant questions arose.

Pierce had never concealed his desire to acquire Cuba at the first convenient and legitimate opportunity. Cushing

of the American war-ship, *St. Louis*, hearing of this unwarranted arrest, turned his guns on the Austrian vessel on which Koszta was imprisoned, and, by a show of force, compelled the Austrian authorities to hand Koszta over to the French Consul, pending some arrangement between the countries concerned. Hülsemann, the Austrian *Chargé d'Affaires* in Washington, then demanded that we disavow Ingraham's action and make proper reparation to Austria. It was in reply to Hülsemann that Marcy wrote his letter. Koszta, the innocent victim of an international dispute, was finally released and returned to the United States.



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ing, it must be admitted, would have seized any pretext for a break with Spain, and, in February, 1854, the long-expected "overt act" was committed. The *Black Warrior*, a vessel engaged in coast trade between New York and Mobile, was detained at Havana, and four hundred bales of cotton were confiscated by the customs authorities. Washington was, of course, much aroused by the news. Pierce consulted Cushing, who advised drastic action, and instructions were sent at once to Pierre Soulé, our Minister to Spain, directing him to insist on damages and a full apology. The answer, withheld for some weeks, seemed even to Marcy to be unsatisfactory. Caleb Cushing advocated the sternest retaliation. In an editorial for the *Washington Union*, he wrote:

"We are quite free to state, and in terms so emphatic and unequivocal as to admit of no misinterpretation, that if ample satisfaction is not allowed for the piratical seizure of the *Black Warrior*, we shall advocate an immediate blockade of that island."

The *New York Times* suggested that the administration had purposely arranged matters so that war with Spain would be inevitable.

The *Times*, however, was incorrect in its supposition. Marcy, during the late spring of 1854, had been able to convince the President that the American people, especially in the Northern states, would not endure an act of unwarranted aggression in Cuban affairs; and Pierce, eager though he was to add Cuba to our dominions, allowed the *Black Warrior* episode to linger along to a more fortunate conclusion. The President was the more easily persuaded to this course because of the controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which was then very violent and which occupied most of his attention. Had it