

The Spanish Minister in Washington—New Phases in the Cuban Question.

The signs of the times from Washington and from Cuba are presenting some new and interesting phases in the Cuban question. We are informed that Señor Roberts, the Spanish Minister, far from being on his high horse and ready to demand his passports because the Cubans have been allowed equal privileges with their cousins, the Spaniards in obtaining arms and assistance from our ports, is on the best possible terms with the Secretary of State and the American people. He is pleased with the sympathy we have expressed with the efforts of the Spanish people to establish a better government than the one they have just torn down, and assures us that so far as Spain is concerned she has no disposition to be used by England or France against the United States. Señor Roberts is an accomplished diplomatist, and this is a very nice way of putting the question before Brother Jonathan. The fact of the case is, however, that Spain has been making strenuous efforts to have what she calls the Great Powers present a diplomatic remonstrance to the United States on the Cuban question, and has failed to obtain it. The Great Powers are as timid as is Mr. Secretary Fish, and they are waiting to see what General Grant will do. He has come into the Presidency with the reputation of being a very Saladin in war, and they wait to see if he is as great in diplomacy. Señor Roberts knows this, and, with all other European diplomatists, waits for the President to show his hand.

Another curious phase with which the mildness of Señor Roberts may have some connection is the unexpected effect which the sequestration decrees of General Dulce are producing upon the Spanish mind in Cuba. It has begun to awaken to the fact that two may play at that game, and should Cespedes issue a decree of confiscation against all Spanish property in Cuba serious complications may arise. In fact, they already begin to show themselves. General Dulce has given to his decrees a retroactive effect, and is laying hands on large amounts of property which have been the subject of *bona fide* sales months ago to American citizens in this city. From this cause complications must result, and Señor Roberts knows it. But the most pointed indication of the drift of Spanish opinion in Cuba is the fact that a private meeting of a number of wealthy Spaniards was held recently in Havana to consider the question of sending a commission to New York to confer with Señor Morales Lemus, the representative in this country of the republican government in Cuba, in regard to the sequestration decrees and the reprisals that must naturally follow.

In view of recent events these are weighty considerations. It is evident from the tenor of accounts from Spanish sources that the revolution is very far from being suppressed. Not only are operations carried on on an active scale in the vicinity of Nuevitas and Puerto Principe, where the Spanish government is now concentrating its efforts, but the insurrec-

tion has not been suppressed in any one district where a body of insurgents have ever appeared. The journals of Havana come to us filled with repeated accounts of victories over and dispersals of bodies of insurgents; but these very repetitions give a palpable contradiction to their previous songs of victory. Villa Clara, Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Remedios, Sancti Espiritu, Ciego de Avila, Puerto Principe, Santa Cruz, Las Tunas, Manzanillo, Bayamo, Gibara, Holguin and Santiago de Cuba are all harassed by insurgent bands in their neighborhood, and their local commanders are continually asking for reinforcements from Havana. On the other hand, every letter and every message that comes from the insurgent camps to this country brings the same cry, "Send us arms, arms. We have men in abundance, but we want arms!" These things all prove that the revolution is a living element in the hearts of the people, and its triumph is merely a question of sacrifices and time.

What, then, should be our course in this turmoil of events and breaking up of old political ties? There can be but one answer. The people of Cuba look hopefully to the American Union as their great ark of refuge from a long and destructive war and prolonged desolation. Their geographical position, their political affinities, the exchanges of industry and trade, all lead them to union with us; and the strategic position of their territory, with its fine harbors and excellent capabilities for aggressive or defensive purposes, make its admission to the Union a necessity now and forever. The administration must hold these great and weighty reasons in view and so shape its policy that this favorable juncture shall not be lost to the nation. Spain must and will lose Cuba. She may make the struggle so long and so destructive that it will be but a desert when she is driven forth if we refuse to throw our moral weight in the scale. In the interests of the Union we have shed so much blood and so many millions of treasure to preserve, in the interests of humanity and civilization, we must exercise our legitimate influence in the struggle. Let the administration announce to Spain that we cannot permit destruction to be prosecuted to no purpose, and that so soon as it is evident to the world that she cannot restore peaceful authority in Cuba by reasonable and humane practices of war we shall assume the right to protect our own interests and those of civilization. Such a step would be worthy the Saladin-like fame of General Grant, and would meet the hearty concurrence of the whole civilized world.