

THE CUBAN INSURRECTION.

The events transpiring in the Island of Cuba are beginning to assume very decidedly more importance than was at first attached to the attempt at revolt. We had supposed that the power of the Spanish government and army would have been sufficient to subdue this revolution, as had been the case with all former efforts. But the insurgents have from the beginning been stronger in numbers and better directed than the dispatches have admitted. In this case the Spanish government has repeated the folly of gabbling the reports of actual events, and sending forth false ones to the world.

Whenever a serious cause of revolution or insurrection exists among a civilized people, no good is ever accomplished by attempting to underrate its magnitude. We found that out to our cost in the civil war. Russia and Austria have by the cases of their more recent conflicts proved that their governments had learned the same useful lesson. But it takes a long time for Spain to learn anything, and consequently we may have a continuance of these misrepresentations of the progress of the Cuban revolution until it is on the brink of success.

It appears from the best information that can be obtained that the rebels have almost complete control in one of the three departments into which Cuba is divided, that the scattered successes of the Spanish troops are no more important in regard to the general conduct of the war than the southern victories that were so powerful in convincing the English people that we were bound to fail in conquering the south; and finally, that the rebels have a regular provisional government, and have proclaimed the abolition of slavery in the island. This weapon, so powerful in all countries where slavery has been in existence, has been the reserved power of the insurrection, and is now brought into effect to enlist the freedmen on the side of independence. It was much the same in all the Spanish American colonies during the memorable era when they succeeded in achieving their independence. In every instance slavery perished in the conflict.

Wherever the rebels exercise sway in Cuba, they will, of course, succeed in emancipating the slaves and enlisting the able-bodied men in their own ranks, as we did in our own conflict. This gives to the movement a command of forces that is of the utmost consequence, and at the same time serves to show the real weakness of slavery as an element in national or international affairs. The planters, having such large interests at stake, are of course reluctant to take part in a revolution, and this is the reason why all former attempts at independence have failed, while, in the present instance, the slaves who are offered their freedom will feel no such hesitation. They have nothing to lose and all to gain.

The Spanish army has been much improved in discipline and effectiveness of late years, though still far behind the military forces of all the great Powers of Europe. In comparison with our American troops the Spanish are scarcely to be considered as of any importance, although their success over the undisciplined horde of filibusters in the various attempts to revolutionize the island of Cuba have rather had the effect of inflating the pride of the Spaniards. In the present instance they are undergoing a lesson that will be useful to them, for many of the officers commanding the Cuban revolutionists at this time are veterans of our own army.

Cuba has yielded a revenue to the Spanish government that seems amazing when we consider its extent and population. Thirty-three millions of dollars is the accredited amount, though the revolutionary manifestoes make it as high as sixty millions. Under such circumstances we can scarcely wonder at the desperate tenacity with which Spain has held on to the island, nor on the other hand at the determined spirit of the people to get rid of their yoke. If the revolutionists can succeed in obtaining control of those revenues the chance of their success will be very strong.