

THE EXPIRING SPANISH CAUSE IN CUBA.

Affairs in Cuba seem to be no better for the Spanish cause, the lapse of time serving in nowise to weaken the insurgents or to strengthen their opponents. It looks now as though out of the confused scene would eventually come Cuban independence, and perhaps it would have come before this if the rebels had possessed in their leader a man of military capacity. Their forces appear to have lacked most of the essential elements of success in the field, but that is not strange in view of the fact that they have no financial status—no military chest. They have nothing to depend upon save their faith in the cause and the hope of reward arising from ultimate triumph; and how hard it is to sustain a protracted contest in that way we know from the experience of our forefathers in the days of '76.

Doubtless there were in Europe in those times men who said of our Revolution, as many say now of the Cuban struggle, that it flourished most on paper. Our conflicts appeared small to European eyes, our successes were inappreciable, and the power and prestige of Great Britain immense. We were but colonists, of the same race as our oppressors; we had never been a nation, and it did not appear that we could succeed. All this may be said of the Cubans. If their struggles are small, and the progress of affairs difficult to understand, it is no more than might have been asserted of our Revolution.

What does at last appear distinctly enough is that fully one-half the island is in complete possession of the insurgents, who openly repudiate Spanish sovereignty and proclaim their independence, while the other half is in the hands of an odd domination of "volunteers," raised to operate against the rebels, but who, unable to contend against them in the field, sought to wreak their vengeance upon the Spanish officials as responsible for the failure, and have therefore revolted, deposed the Captain-General and all his subordinates, and seized the reins of power themselves. They acknowledge neither those who represented Spain nor those who head the insurgent

These "volunteers" appear to be responsible for all the bloody deeds that have brought such disgrace and infamy upon the insular government, and they have deposed the Captain-General because he would not execute an insurgent leader who had fallen into their hands. Of course these "volunteers" are Spaniards. They are the men who have hitherto had a monopoly of government favor and patronage, and who have been accustomed to regard the Cuban creoles as an inferior race. It is not easy to foresee what their course is likely to be, and they have the advantage of being in possession of the government, with all its revenues and resources at command, and the entire military organization in their power. If, upon the arrival of the new force of regular troops sent out from Spain, the commander appointed by the home government should undertake to deal roughly with these impracticables their revolt might become revolution.

In the meantime their leaders are very uneasy, and begin to feel the awkwardness of their position to such an extent that they are alleged to have opened communication, with the rebel chief Cespedes. Substantial aid from the United States has undoubtedly reached the latter, so that he has now good arms and munitions of war, with the still more reliable addition of veteran troops who have seen service in our own civil war. No sooner did these appear in the field than the result was visible in the improved tactics of the rebel forces and the uniform ill fortune that befel the Spanish arms. The danger apprehended from this source has been so great that the Spanish fleet has been unusually vigilant and intrusive in its operations, even to the verge of conflict with the United States.

Now that the reality of the Cuban insurrection is beyond all dispute, many Americans will no doubt go to join the republican cause who have hitherto refrained. Although under the laws of nations our government cannot countenance such movements, there is nothing to prevent our citizens taking upon themselves the personal risk and responsibility of doing so. This is the last remnant of the once mighty colonial empire of Spain in America, and to the last it has been governed without a shadow of concession to the progressive spirit of the age. Much of the ability of Spanish governments at home to oppress their people has rested upon the large revenues derived from Cuba; revenues so out of proportion to the population that they seem incredible to us.