

ranks increased by desertion from the Spanish troops, who find it impossible to endure the climate. It is estimated that 50 per cent. of the Spanish volunteers from sickness are put *hors du combat*. The hospitals are full to overflowing. Much anxiety has been felt by Cubans respecting the position of our Government on the Cuban question, and many are inclined to believe that unless some action is taken upon the matter the insurrection will continue for a long time, as it is impossible for any force that Spain can send to exterminate the rebel force, owing to the climate and the topography of the country, while both contending parties destroy every vestige of agriculture. It is generally known and admitted by the liberal-minded Spanish officers, who do not conceal the fact, that it is impossible to suppress the insurrection, and the only inducement offered for the continuance of the war is that the commanding officials are filling their pockets at the expense of the country. The health of the city continues in an abnormal condition, smallpox, epidemic fevers and misery to an alarming extent prevailing.

THE CUBAN QUESTION.

General Sickles' Letter Withdrawing the Celebrated Note—Advice of the Spanish Foreign Minister to the United States—Spanish Cruelties in Cuba—Report of the American Consul at Santiago.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22.—The remaining documents on the Cuban question were to-day laid before the House, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. General SICKLES addressed to Mr. SILVELA, Sept. 28, 1869, a note, in which he says:

WITHDRAWAL OF THE "NOTE."

"On the 31st of July last, in compliance with the instructions of his Government, he offered to the Government of Spain the good offices of the United States in the manner that should be found most expedient for the pacification of the Island of Cuba. His Excellency, the Minister of State, in a subsequent conference, communicated to the undersigned the reply of the Cabinet of Madrid to the overture; and the undersigned, having duly transmitted the same to his Government, informed the Minister of State, on the 3d of September inst., of the views of the President in regard to the basis suggested on the part of Spain in that conference, and at the same time the undersigned communicated to the Cabinet at Madrid the basis proposed by the United States for the adjustment of the questions pending between Spain and Cuba. The propositions were deemed by the President to be most advantageous to all the interests compromised by the deplorable conflict in the Island of Cuba, and it was believed the arrangement would be acceptable to the Government of Spain. His Excellency the Minister of State, acknowledging for the Cabinet of Madrid the sincerity and friendship of the offer made by the United States, has intimated to the undersigned that the basis proposed by the United States cannot be accepted by Spain, and that even the friendly intervention of another Power would embarrass the Spanish Government in proceeding with the liberal measures it proposes to initiate to meet the requirement of the situation in the Antilles. The undersigned, therefore, in conformity with instructions, withdraws the offer of the good offices of the President of the United States heretofore communicated to the Government of His Highness, the Regent, and while both nations will reserve their full liberty of action, if the occasion shall hereafter arise when the United States may contribute by their friendly cooperation to the settlement of the questions at issue in Cuba, the undersigned is instructed to state that the President will be happy to assist in promoting a result so conducive to the interests of Spain and America."

MR. SILVELA'S REPLY.

On the 8th of October Mr. SILVELA wrote:

"The Spanish Government had accepted with gratitude these humanitarian good offices. What it did not accept, because it could not accept them, were all the bases upon which they were founded, bases which evidently, as it now appears, constituted the essential condition of the offer. The Spanish Government could not accept these bases, the first of which was the independence of Cuba, because even if they had wished it, it was not within their competence to assent to a dismemberment of the territory of this monarchy without the permission or authorization of the Cortes. But the Cortes, far from permitting and authorizing this, manifested by a unanimous resolution of their permanent commissions, that they were ready to lend their entire support to the Government in an elevated and dignified policy in the Cuban question, calculated to preserve the integrity of the territory and national honor, and were disposed to convoke the national representatives to strengthen the action of the Government. The Spanish Government, nevertheless, as I have already said, has accepted the good offices, hoping that in the first place they would be exercised by the Government of the United States, using their influence with the promoters of the insurrection, who had sought refuge in the territory of that Republic, to induce the insurgents to lay down their arms. The Spanish Government proposed spontaneously to present to the Constituent Cortes for their deliberation, in accord with the Deputies of the Island, measures which should tend to give to the Cubans the liberties their condition may require in harmony with those proclaimed in Spain, a complete amnesty for those who have fought against the mother country, a gradual emancipation of the slaves, and the right of the free to hold public offices and to share in making the laws. The humanitarian good offices were accepted with gratitude upon these bases. If the United States now withdraw them, it is apparently because they consider as an inflexible basis of any negotiations the Declaration of Independence, to which neither the respect which the Government professes to the Constitution of Spain nor other considerations not less important, permit us to accede. But as the offer of good offices is being withdrawn the Spanish Government can do no less than consider the basis and conclusions on which they were founded as having passed out of view. This is sufficient to cause the Spanish Government to recognize the fairness of the Government of the United States, and the respect which is due to the sovereignty of a people which has been its friend and ally from the beginning of its glorious history. Your Excellency, moreover, observes, in ending your note, that while the President of the Republic reserves his liberty of action, he will be happy if he can contribute in anything to the pacification of Cuba—a result equally advantageous to the interest of America and Spain. His frank and noble declaration is extremely satisfactory, and I beg that your Excellency will present to the President the thanks of the Spanish Government. At the same time I venture to indicate two acts, which it is in his power to accomplish, and which will serve as an illustration of these loyal and friendly purposes towards Spain: First, to exercise all his natural influences upon those who, having taken refuge in American territory to foment the rebellion, to the end that they, following the generous initiative of the Spanish Government contained in the *Gazette* of the 23th of September, may induce their followers to abstain from giving a savage character to the conflict with the outrages and crimes with which they have been hitherto stained. The Spanish Government having manifested its purpose to carry on the contest within the limits prescribed by modern civilization—orders having been given to the authorities to proceed with all the moderation required by humanity—it would be truly monstrous if the insurgents should continue the barbarous conflict which they have begun, and should keep on perpetrating the excesses which outrage the consciences of honorable men, rendering themselves wholly unworthy of the generous hospitality which the Republic dispenses to those who, under the name of the Cuban Junta, stand forth as promoters of the insurrection. The Spanish Government having spontaneously set this example, and being resolved to act in a civilized and humanitarian sense, a wide field is opened to the United States to show their sympathies and good will towards a Government and nation which proceeds in this manner, notwithstanding the conduct of the rebels. The second act, which may illustrate the sincerity of the President's offers, is in regard to the gunboats constructed in the United States by order and at the expense of Spain, not to go against her or even to fight the insurgents of Cuba, but to defend our coasts against the aggressions of filibusters and pirates. The strongest argument which your Excellency has used on various occasions to demonstrate the importance of the insurrection has been the extent of its duration; but this argument will have no weight while the insurrection receives continual increase of nutriment from abroad, while it does not remain isolated and without other champions than the Cubans themselves. Only when the insurrection continues in this manner can it be urged that it is vested and rooted in the country, that the majority of the Cubans desire to be independent, and even that they are worthy to be sustained, and are possessed of sufficient means and energy to form a nationality and a separate State. At this time, in the present state of things in the Island, Spain cannot believe or admit the majority of the Cubans incline to separation from the mother country, but that a turbulent and blind minority, exerted and aided by adventurers and speculators of other countries, by filibusters and pirates, guided by evil persons and not by patriotic purposes, aspire to overcome the general will of their own countrymen, and that this is the sole cause of the disorder which we deplore. Spain does not, and cannot, see in Cuba the profound sentiment of true capacity for independence, and therefore, if she should consent to a separation from that rich and ancient colony, she would not have the great consolation of thinking that she was giving existence to a new nation, but the deep remorse of a weak abandoning of her own children, of leaving unprotected a people of her own language and race to miserably perish and disappear. These reasons are sufficiently strong to be esteemed at their just value by a Government so enlightened as that which your Excellency here worthily represents, and in whose friendly cooperation Spain still trusts to give peace to Cuba, and with peace, those ample liberties which her Constitutions grant to every Spanish citizen on either hemisphere."

SPANISH CRUELTY IN CUBA.

U. S. CONSULATE, SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Jan. 3, 1870.
The political state of SANTIAGO in this Consular district is in a most deplorable condition. The assassination at Bayamo of the citizens sent from this city, by order of Count VALMASEDA, which fact I have already communicated to the Department, was nothing more than what is daily perpetrated. It is well known that VALMASEDA aspires to the position of Captain-General of the island, and in order to increase his popularity among the blood-craving Catalans, who are operating in his behalf both in this Island and in Spain, gives imperative orders to make this a war of extermination; and we daily learn of peaceful citizens residing in the country being assassinated by the mobilized Spanish troops. These orders are probably carried to an extreme, from the fact that those commanding such troops are constantly supplying some Catalan produce dealers in this City, and whose object is to sack the country and forward to their agents such portions of the crop as may fall into their hands. The planters are persecuted to such a degree as to be compelled to flee from their estates, and their crops are immediately sequestered and appropriated to private purposes. Very little credit can be placed upon the Spanish Press, being a Government organ, which maintains that the insurrection is finished in this Department, which is far from the truth. The insurrection continues in full force, and there are frequent arrivals of wounded Spanish soldiers. The Cubans, being better armed and disciplined than formerly, in many cases take the offensive, and have had their