

**Important Exhibit of the Cuban Negotiations—The Approaching Settlement.**

We submit to our readers this morning, in our Washington despatches, a carefully prepared summing up of the negotiations between the United States and Spain on the Cuban question since the appointment of General Sickles as our Minister at Madrid. Although from a mistaken departure, as we think, the initial and successive steps and incidents in these negotiations, as detailed in this statement, make the whole case perfectly clear and consistent in reference to the course pursued by Mr. Secretary Fish and our Minister and in reference also to the embarrassments of the Spanish government.

The preliminary proposition of General Sickles on the 3d of September last to the provisional government at Madrid, it thus appears, was simply the friendly offices of the United States in behalf of an amicable settlement between Spain and the Cuban revolutionists. This offer being favorably received, our Minister, pursuant to instructions, next submitted a basis of settlement, embracing four propositions:—First, Cuban independence; second, indemnity to Spain; third, the abolition of slavery; fourth, the cessation of hostilities. The proposed indemnity to Spain, to be guaranteed by the United States, in plain English, was the payment of one hundred millions of dollars for the island. In answer to these propositions Señor Silvela, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, submitted as an indispensable condition precedent that the Cubans lay down their arms, and that next the question of a separation from Spain be submitted to the people of the island in an election under the Spanish authorities. Mr. Fish could not entertain these propositions, and thought that the election under the conditions suggested would be a mockery. Finally, the propositions from Spain assumed this shape:—First, a disarming by the Cubans; second, indemnity to Spain for Spanish property destroyed, to be guaranteed by the United States; third, a free election to the Cubans on the question of separation from Spain; fourth, a general amnesty.

These four propositions against the four submitted by General Sickles give us the condition in which the negotiations stand at this time. Nothing further has been done towards striking a balance between the high contracting parties. It seems to be understood, however, that the internecine difficulties of Spain have compelled the present government to deal with this Cuban question with extreme caution; that any definitive movement to relinquish on any terms the "Ever Faithful Island" would be apt to fuse the republican party, the Church party (comprising the adherents of Isabella), the Carlists and all the rival personal factions of the peninsula in a common cause against the *de facto* government; but that with a strong government established under Serrano or Prim, for instance, the transfer of the island from Spain to the United States may be readily accomplished. Meantime, it appears from an impartial reconnoissance of the island made by our Consul General Plumb in person, that the rebellion is substantially at an end; that the insurgents are reduced to a few thousand bushwhackers scattered about in the mountains, incapable of anything beyond petty guerrilla operations, which may be prolonged indefinitely to no purpose.

We are, then, on the Cuban question reduced to the alternative of awaiting the establishment of a strong government in Spain. When will that be? This is a question hard to answer; but as the Spanish government *pro tem.* has apparently exhausted itself in its efforts to secure an outside volunteer for King or Regent, a *coup d'état* on the part of General Prim is hourly expected. After such *coup d'état*, if a Napoleonic success, the necessities of Prim in the matter of cash will probably leave him no other resource than the sale of Cuba for the one hundred millions awaiting him in the unrecalled offer of our government through General Sickles. Dealing with things as they are, the cause of the Cubans is lost as a basis of action and as a balance of power, and our only course now appears to be to await the upshot of events in Spain.

General Grant, in other words, has permitted a golden opportunity to slip through his fingers. A little dash would have fixed it. We can see, in all the details of this business, no cause of complaint against General Sickles. On the contrary, in obedience to his instructions, he has acted throughout with remarkable fidelity and discretion, whatever may be said upon small technicalities, which signify nothing. The great mistake was made at Washington in the outset in utterly ignoring the resolution adopted by the unanimous vote of the House of Representatives at the close of the last session of Congress, a resolution which would have been seconded by the Senate had the session continued even one day longer. That resolution, in the absence of Congress, and by the unanimous voice of the representatives of the American people, gave the President full authority to concede belligerent rights to the Cubans in his discretion. Had he assumed the responsibility to act accordingly he would have been supported by Congress and the American people, and the Cuban question would have been settled within ninety days.

But what of the Alabama claims? Would not the recognition of Céspedes have been the recognition of Admiral Semmes? Oh, ye of little faith! Oh, that ye knew the age we live in! That recognition of Semmes was the apprehension in the State Department, and, moreover, Mr. Senator Sumner professed to have his misgivings of the maintenance of slavery in the Cuban republic. Still, the whole Cuban problem resolves into this:—The island, which was fairly within our reach, without money and without price, we shall probably be able to purchase for one hundred millions of dollars in the event of the establishment of a strong government in Spain. It is only the difference between shaping and awaiting the drift of events, which was and is the difference between the Bonapartes and the Bourbons.