

Cuba, Spain and the Administration.

Our news from Washington regarding Spain hour after hour confirms and justifies the ground we took some days ago. In advance of all our contemporaries we pronounced the Cuban revolution a failure. In many quarters where the surprise was felt the course we took was condemned; but to-day the views of the HERALD are universally accepted as just. It was our hope and belief at one time that the Cuban insurgents would prove true to themselves, and that the cause was so good that they could not fail to win. We lent them our powerful help; but facts convince us that in the whole history of revolutions the Cuban insurgents have proved the feeblest and least effective of all revolutionists. They have had their time, their chance, their opportunity; but in spite of all these, and with all the help they have received, they have bungled and failed. Our reports a few days ago proved this. The reports of Consul General Plumb, the burden of which we gave in the HERALD of yesterday, amply justify us in the course we felt compelled to adopt. Mr. Plumb is an impartial judge. He was a Cuban sympathizer. He was opposed to Spain. So much was this the case that Señor Roberts, the Spanish Minister at Washington, felt it to be his duty to protest against the appointment of Mr. Plumb as consular agent of the United States in Cuba. But, strange to say, this friend of Cuba, this enemy of Spain, has been compelled to admit that he was deceived, and that really there is no cause for United States interference, and for this simple reason, that rebellion in Cuba is a name, not a fact. A few wandering guerillas, without munitions of war, without food, without a home, are not strong enough to justify the American people in saying that they can or ought now to be recognized as belligerents.

At the same time we must reiterate what we said some days ago, that for all this the Cubans are themselves to blame primarily and the American government secondarily. On the Cuban bungle we will not dwell. On the bungling of our administration we cannot dwell at sufficient length. If action had been taken by our government when the affair was ripe, when Cubans were filled with enthusiasm, and when Spain was on the point of giving up the struggle, we should have had no trouble in the matter. It would all have been settled, and this settlement would have been easy. It seems, however, that so far as the American government were concerned common sense and pluck perished with Secretary Rawlins. Poor dying Rawlins saw what should be done. He spoke what he felt. Early in September he was present at a Cabinet meeting. At this Cabinet meeting, mainly in consequence of his advice, it was agreed that a proclamation should be issued on the 31st of September recognizing Cuba as a belligerent Power. Between the Cabinet meeting and the 31st Rawlins was no more. His manly policy died with him. The proclamation was never made. Cuba was deceived. Spain was permitted to remain master of the situation. Roberts at Washington and Sickles at Madrid were, in all likelihood the one as much as the other, put to their wits' end. Roberts, however, has been amply satisfied; things have gone on very much to his satisfaction, but poor Sickles must have been for some months past finding it difficult to know what to do. No one, however, can blame Sickles. He has done his best. His best has been fairly good, and if it has not come up to the high requirements of the situation the blame rests with the administration rather than with him. Sickles has had to contend with two difficulties—a government that was not a government and an administration that did not know its mind.

Meanwhile we have only to reiterate what we have said before. We cannot recognize Cuba as a belligerent power. We cannot, because there is no belligerency. But we have our duties, and we must not ignore them. The insurrection in Cuba has been crushed mainly through our influence. Cuba, however, will remain as dissatisfied as ever. She will never submit to Spain. A new class of ideas have got abroad among the people. Their opinions are changed. They are sick of uncertainty. They would like to be independent, but above all things they long for a strong government. The men who own large estates and the people who earn their daily bread are equally in agony. The island, the most beautiful and most fertile island in the world, is being ruined. Life is being sacrificed, fields are being wasted. We could, we still can, prevent both, but we do not. If suffering still exists in Cuba the fault is not that of the American people. Their sympathies have never changed. They are as much with the Cubans to-day as they were six months ago. Witness the action taken by the Senate of the United States yesterday. To-day Senator Morton speaks on the general question. We have no doubt that he will express the sentiments of the great body of our people; but to-day, as yesterday, facts must be accepted. We are responsible for the continuance of bloodshed and for the waste of property; but our responsibility means now—no more, no less—that we should buy the island. Let us force on the purchase. We cannot wait upon Spain. Let us make an offer and push it. If the present rulers of Spain cannot act for the Spanish people that is Spain's misfortune. We cannot help it. If Spain will not take our money we have no choice but to do by Spain in Cuba as we did by France in Mexico—bid her go home and mind her own business. The American people have hitherto been patient; but Secretary Fish and the administration generally must not push them too far. In spite of our law-abiding tendencies we hate injustice. America for the Americans is more than ever the passion of our citizens.