Success of the Cubans—A New Phase of the Cuban Question Presented.

The news published yesterday from Cuba shows that a fierce and bloody battle had been fought between the Spaniards under General Puello and the patriots under General Jordan, and that the latter had defeated the former in a very decisive manner. Puello lost thirty-six officers and four hundred men killed and wounded, and narrowly escaped himself. The Spanish General returned with the remnant of his army to Puerto Principe. There had been severe fighting, also, ten leagues from Santiago de Cuba, in which, it appears, the Spaniards had the worst of it again. This is evident, not only from the loss reported, but also from the fact that a mule train, carrying provisions for estates near San Luis, was ordered to return for fear of the insurgents, who were reported to be in considerable force between the Spaniards and Santiago de Cuba. It must be borne in mind that this news comes from Havana, and therefore is much more likely to give the most favorable account for the Spaniards and to put these disasters in the best light than to exaggerate the success of the Cubans. We have no doubt that when we get at all the facts it will turn out that the Cuban successes were greater than now reported. Considering the nature of the war and the policy of the Cubans to keep up an exhaustive guerilla warfare, which is the best for them, this battle in the neighborhood of Guaimaro was a most important one, and shows the ability of the patriots to sustain themselves, even against considerable and well equipped armies.

These successes of the Cubans present a new phase to the question of belligerency and for the consideration of our government. According to Mr. Secretary Fish and Mr. Plumb, the war in Cuba was virtually at an end a few weeks ago and the Cubans were mere bands of roving outcasts, without resources or hope. True, in strange contradiction to this assertion, it was admitted that the Cubans would carry on a defensive and a guerilla warfare for some years, which, by the way, would have been quite sufficient for the United States to have acted upon in favor of Cuban independence, if the government at Washington had not been under Spanish influence and had really desired to see Cuba free. It was a very curious and significant circumstance that the war should have been reported at an end by high authority just at the time Congress was about to reassemble, and when it seemed probable that the representatives of the people would take some action in favor of Cuba. It was curious, too, that the late Consul at Havana, Mr. Plumb, should have been brought to Washington to make such a representation just then, particularly as it is generally understood that he is strong on the Spanish side and not at all favorable to the Cubans. But facts are stronger than words, and it is quite evident now that the war is not at an end, and not likely to be till Cuba acquires her independence. Of course we shall hear garbled and soothing accounts from Havana about the disasters to the Spaniards, and we shall hear for the hundredth time of the wonderful things which the Spaniards are going to do, and this may satisfy our Secretary of State. But will the people of this republic and Congress be deceived by such shallow misrepresentations and subterfuges?

It is whispered around that the Cuban question is to find a solution in another way than by war, by the recognition of the belligerency or independence of the Cubans, or by aid to the patriots from the United States. There is an impression that our government is going to buy Cuba, either in the name and with the money of the Cubans, or out and out from the United States Treasury, and that the administration is only waiting till Prim, Serrano and other Spanish leaders can get public sentiment in Spain favorable to the sale of the island. This must be a long and doubtful way of reaching the object, at least, and from present appearances the Cubans may settle the question before the job can be accomplished. How long will it take these Spanish leaders to prepare the public mind in Spain? What revolutions may not occur in that volcanic country to upset this scheme? No doubt the sum of a hundred millions or a hundred and fifty millions of dollars is a tempting bait for these Spanish chiefs, for the Spanish agents in this country and for the lobby at Washington; but to grab it depends upon doubtful and remote contingencies. After all, it is a question whether the astute Spanish leaders at Madrid and their cunning agents here are not leading our simple Secretary of State in a string, and that if they could crush the rebellion in Cuba by the aid or direct assistance of our government they might not then politely inform us that public sentiment in Spain could not be brought to favor the sale of the island. Then, again, how much less will Cuba be worth after years of desolating war? But why pay a hundred millions or more for that which can be obtained for nothing? And do we owe nothing to humanity and nothing to the principle of republican liberty on American soil, that we should stand with our arms folded, looking on with indifference, while a bloody, cruel and useless war is going on almost within sight of our shores? If Spain would accept now a hundred millions or a hundred and fifty millions for Cuba and stop the war at once, that, perhaps, might be the best and cheapest way to settle the question. But to wait till the Spaniards are worn out by the war and the Cubans have the best prospect of success, or till the island is ruined and thousands are slain, would be inhuman, impolitic and foolish. It is only necessary for the United States to take a decided stand in favor of Cuban independence, and that without compromising the honor of the republic or involving us in difficulties of any kind, to force Spain to terms or to secure the freedom of Cuba. Has the government the sense and firmness to take this course? That is the question. It ought to remember that this is an important matter, and that judgment will be passed upon its conduct both by the American people now and by history.