

Mr. Fish Again on the Cuban Question.

We published yesterday the material points of a recent batch of official letters between Secretary Fish, at Washington, and Minister Sickles, at Madrid, on the Cuban question, from which we infer that the administration has descended to the ultimatum of the abolition of slavery in the island by Spain, and has abandoned or postponed indefinitely the idea of Cuban annexation or independence. Spain, on the other hand, is full of promises of liberal institutions for Cuba, and the gradual abolition of slavery, after the suppression of the rebellion; but as for an armistice, meantime, it is impracticable. Spain, however, is very anxious for information as to the designs of the United States, and very desirous of cultivating the most friendly relations.

So much for Spain. She is making some headway on the question, though not much. Mr. Fish, on the other hand, is crawfishing—going backward. He thinks that since the impudent behavior of the Cubans in the United States the public interest in Cuban affairs has decreased, which is a great mistake. After roundly lecturing the Cuban Junta he proceeds to tell General Sickles that Spain must abolish slavery; that she is committed to emancipation, and that he accordingly expects her to move in the matter and in those reforms she has promised in the island. In fact, Mr. Fish thinks that the only way whereby Spain can end the war in Cuba is the way of emancipation. He really appears to be anxious for the perpetuation of the dominion of Spain over Cuba, and afraid that unless she makes haste to abolish slavery the island will slip through her fingers. But there is still a drop of comfort in this remarkable letter of Mr. Fish, in the declaration which General Sickles is instructed to make to Spain, that "this government has maintained its freedom of action against great pressure; that its action will be governed by facts as they occur, and that the President reserves complete liberty of action in case Spain fails to restore peace."

This is something; but it looks very much like a tub thrown out to amuse the American whale. We think the case is clear that Mr. Fish is a conservative of the old Bourbon stock, that he is afraid to take a single bold step forward, and so goes backward, and that General Grant himself needs very much a stirring resolution from Congress touching the American doctrines of neutrality and belligerent rights. The Alabama claims have been laid up to dry, and Mr. Fish's correspondence betrays a desire for the same disposition of the Cuban question.