

The Cuban Question in Congress—Some Action Probable.

It appears by the news from Washington that the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs had a long discussion again yesterday on the Cuban question. Among the different propositions that have been made in the Senate and referred to the committee, with a view to give the Cubans a fair chance in their struggle for freedom, that of Senator Morton seems to be most favored. It is the mildest of all, does not declare the Cubans belligerents in express terms, but it prohibits aid being given in materials of war from this country to any foreign government at war with a people or colony with whom this republic is at peace. It recognizes the Cubans as a people distinct from the Spaniards and indirectly as belligerents. Such action, if Congress should go no further at present, will have a good moral effect, and may be the entering wedge to something more bold and positive hereafter. But it will come too late to be of much service otherwise to the Cuban cause. Spain has obtained a vast amount of materials of war from this country, and, perhaps, nearly all she needed, as well as the thirty gunboats, and to prohibit now any more such supplies seems like shutting the stable door after the horse has escaped. A bolder and more decided course and a plainer recognition of the Cubans would be more in accordance with public sentiment, and more creditable to this great country, which represents the principle of republican liberty in America. It is said that President Grant, in a conversation with a prominent Congressman who favors the Cubans, indicated his willingness to carry out any recommendation which the friends of the administration in Congress might make. We have never doubted that the President sympathized warmly with the people of Cuba in their struggle for freedom. Indeed, he has expressed that on several occasions. He has been deterred from acting by the influence and misrepresentations of illiberal and narrow-minded men around him. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that he will willingly co-operate with Congress in any action that body may take favoring the cause of Cuban independence.

The news we publish to-day of the atrocious and inhuman conduct of the Spaniards to American citizens as well as to the Cubans ought to have the effect, too, of arousing our government. Eighteen well known citizens were arrested at or near Santiago de Cuba, taken to an obscure place fifteen miles away, and there tried by court martial, without counsel or the examination of witnesses, and immediately executed. Among these victims of Spanish barbarity were two citizens of the United States—one a native born and the other a naturalized citizen. The Acting Governor, Ojedo, appears to have had some humanity or sense of justice; for on hearing of the arrest of these men he issued an order to have them all sent back to the city. But Colonel Dort, commanding the contra-guerrillas, refused to obey the Governor, alleging that he had superior orders from Valmaseda. This butchery is but a repetition of what is constantly occurring. It is only a few days ago that news came of a similar slaughter of some twenty unarmed people. It is only a week or two since the brutal volunteers killed Greenwalt and dangerously wounded two peaceable American citizens in the streets of Havana. In fact, it would fill columns to recite all the barbarities of the Spaniards in Cuba. These bloodhounds, and the Spanish government in the island which stands at their back, have placed themselves beyond the consideration of civilized governments or people. They should not be tolerated by any nation, and least of all by the United States. They ought to be denounced as barbarians and the enemies of mankind. We cannot believe that our government—the government of this mighty and enlightened republic—has sunk so low and is so cowardly as not to denounce these frightful atrocities and to afford some protection to American citizens. We have no expectation that the Spaniards will act less brutal in the future. It remains for our government to say whether this barbarous war shall continue. Either give Spain notice that she must leave the island by selling it to the United States or strengthen the hands of the Cubans to drive out the Spaniards. Any other policy would be weak, inhuman and unworthy this republic. We have had trouble enough for forty years or more about Cuba, and shall have more unless the question is settled now. Let us seize the opportunity afforded by the existing state of affairs to settle at once and forever this Cuban question.