

Our Shilly-shally, Halting Policy—General Banks Needing a Spur—Dangers of Further Delay in Recognizing Cuba—A Change of Base Not Necessarily Causing a Change of Premiers—Why Secretary Fish Need Not Resign.

WASHINGTON, June 4, 1870.

Poor struggling Cuba—which, according to some, is on its very last legs now, and, according to others, possesses just as much fighting vigor as ever—has been kept very prominently before the public for over two weeks by the spicy debates in Congress, the publication of Banks' report and the conflicting rumors from Havana. The confident prediction that Congress would do something in the line of asserting a bold national policy on the subject has not been fulfilled. Procrastination, the insidious thief of time, is at work with our lawmakers. In this vital business of aid to Cuba the policy seems to be delay, delay, delay. "Let us first dispose of our tariff," says one member. "O, yes, you have our sympathy, and we will display it in a telling manner. But let us alone until we fix up the reduction of taxes," says another. "I am with you, heart and soul," says a third; "but you know we cannot neglect the appropriations. The government can't be run at the end of this month unless we shall have voted it pecuniary supplies." In the mean time, while all these sympathetic protestations and promises are being made, a cargo of pickaninny, little legislative measures is floated through Congress, and yet the cry about Cuba is "Wait, wait, wait." "Have a little patience." "Give us a little more time."

Was ever such a miserable, dilly-dallying policy pursued by a great government before on a question of such vital importance to its own interests? Was ever such shameful neglect committed? Here we are, the greatest and freest Power on the globe. Our boast is that we have a heart big enough to sympathize and arms lusty enough to succor all the struggling nationalities of the globe in their efforts against tyranny. And yet here at our very doors is a little people battling in the same cause as impelled our forefathers to contend with Old England, battling nobly, too, for sixteen or eighteen months against the oppression of cruel and rapacious rulers, while we refuse to give them even a word of rational cheer and encouragement. Worse still, our own American citizens are butchered in Cuba without cause, by the bloodthirsty Spaniards, and when two sterling representatives, like Logan and Voorhees, call loudly and eloquently for action the reply is, wait for the tariff, hold up till we fix the tax or tarry yet a little while till we adopt the appropriations.

Congressman Voorhees well told his fellow members the other day that our government could take a lesson from Great Britain, who never failed to protect her citizens, the wide world over, promptly and thoroughly, boldly and firmly, never stopping till she recovered justice or enforced satisfaction. Mr. Voorhees' description of the style in which England punished the Abyssinian Theodore for outrages to British subjects ought truly to make Americans blush for the impunity with which their brethren have been harassed and butchered on a soil almost within sight of their own territory and belonging to a weak and tottering despotism.

With so many causes of grievance against Spain for the deliberate and cold-blooded murder of inoffensive Americans, it is worse than neglect to allow a moment's delay in demanding adequate indemnity. It exposes us to the charge of being mean-spirited and lacking in that high sense of dignity which places national honor before dollars and cents, which ignores every trifling consideration, even such as the mighty Schenck's mighty tariff and the stalworth Dawes' appropriations, when such great issues are at stake as the immunity of an American citizen abroad.

Don't it seem a bare possibility that the great American nation would pardon its Congress if it would lay aside for a few days, ay even for a week, its dreary monotonous concerning finance, taxation, ways and means and the like, and enter heart and soul with the spirit of '76 and 1812 into this business of Spanish insults to its flag and Spanish slaughter of its citizens. It really seems as though such a thing were possible, and that the consequence would not be an entire disarrangement of the executive, legislative and judicial economies.

But to be serious. I am almost despairing of Banks. He is too slow apparently, or too scared of defeat. If you ask him when he is going to press the fight on his resolution and report, he answers:—"Just as soon as I can get a chance." "Why don't you do it now?" you may chance to inquire further. "Oh, well," Banks replies, "I don't want to risk a defeat, I want to bring up the matter when the whole House will give me its attention and when I won't be clashing with other interests." And so Banks goes on from day to-day, losing chances and perilling the cause of Cuba itself. For suppose while Banks procrastinates some overwhelming disaster should fall upon the Cuban patriots—some disaster which would crush out the rebellion altogether—what good would then be his report and resolution? Of what avail his generous sympathies, his eloquent sentences and splendid intentions? The golden opportunity would be lost, and perhaps forever. The "ever faithful" would be fettered more strongly than ever by their Spanish masters and the noble aspirations of a gallant people for independence effectually destroyed.

It is possible that General Banks may pluck up sufficient courage to ask next week the attention of the House to this subject, an attention which I feel confident would be denied by not more than a dozen members. But I fear he will wait still longer, until Logan and Voorhees spur him on to action.

WHAT LOGAN AND VOORHEES PROPOSE.

I have informed you already as to the programme agreed upon, and I now repeat it. It is the intention of Logan and Voorhees, should Banks let the matter drag until Monday week, to call it up themselves on that day, and beg the House to give it immediate consideration. Then General Banks may be sure he will get his long looked for opportunity, and if he fails to improve it he will have no one to blame but himself. I am unwilling to believe that the House will fail to sustain him in resolutions urging recognition of the Cubans, and demanding indemnity of the Spaniards for their insults to the flag and outrages upon the citizens of the United States. I feel confident that should such resolutions pass the House they would be concurred in by the Senate, spite of whatever opposition Mr. Sumner might make; and I have good assurances that then, Congress having plainly spoken its will, President Grant would gladly change his policy and seize the occasion to add new laurels to his name by upholding the honor and sacred character of our flag and citizenship in such manner as the exigencies of the case require. In doing so he would only be faithful to his promises when he took the oath of office. Then he solemnly declared he would hold to no policy not in unison with the popular will.

FISH NEED NOT RESIGN.

In the event of such a happy accord occurring between executive and legislative it would not follow necessarily that Secretary Fish should resign. Indeed, in common fairness I think it is due to Mr. Fish to state that he is not the stubborn man people suppose. He has not single-handed and alone contended for the past do-nothing policy toward Cuba. In pursuing the course he did he had the confidence and approbation of the President. Should Congress, therefore, demand a change in that policy the responsibility therefor, for weal or for woe, would be upon Congress, not upon Fish. The latter would not feel hurried; he would not consider it necessary to throw up his portfolio, any more than General Grant would consider it incumbent upon himself to resign the Presidency. I make this explanation because some people think that the President hesitates to declare for Cuba only because of his friendship for Fish, and his unwillingness to mortify the latter or to take a step rendering necessary the withdrawal of his Premier. It is but a sorry compliment to the President to suppose that he would sacrifice the will of the whole nation, its interests and honor, for the sake of one Cabinet minister or the whole of them. I have reason to know that both the President and Secretary Fish would hail as a decided relief any action by Congress which would transfer from the shoulders of the administration the responsibility of change in a policy which they have conscientiously believed to be just and proper. Let, therefore, General Banks hurry up his report, which the whole country has now read, and let Congress back him up heartily in whatever recommendations he may make, provided they go far enough in assertion of American honor.