

## The New Government de Facto in Cuba and Its Relations.

The question of the future political relations of Cuba is assuming the dimensions of an international affair, and seems likely to become at an early day one of the most important of the American Continent. Within the island a revolutionary movement has been in progress since last October, and although our advices from there come almost entirely through Spanish sources, it is evident from these that the Spanish government has lost its hold upon one half of the island, excepting only a narrow strip of shore commanded by the guns of its fleet. At the present moment the new Captain General sent out by the provisional government of Spain is making a laudable and strenuous effort to allay the revolution by the introduction of radical reforms in the colonial government, but with doubtful prospects of success. The wealthy classes ask for something more than vague generalities, and the popular masses demand nothing short of immediate and complete revolution.

Outside of the island the question is producing lively agitation in political circles. In Washington anxious eyes are turned to Cuba, as the key of the arc of coastwise navigation on our Atlantic shore; and the recent sudden springing of a protectorate question in the House of Representatives would not have met so ignominious a failure as it did had its promoters contemplated the broader basis which was open to them in this movement in Cuba. The Mexican Cabinet is also taking an active interest in the subject, and has recently sent a special agent, Señor Zenea, to this country as the special confidant of its views and wishes. A smaller but not entirely insignificant element in the complication is the Dominican republic, where the anti-Spanish party is on the eve of triumph over the government of President Baez. This island, lying as it does between the Spanish Islands of Cuba and Porto Rico, possesses ready means of danger to the Spanish forces which promise to be brought into play at an early day, while the leading journals of Mexico openly announce that no neutrality laws bind their shores, and they owe Spain a grudge.

In Mexico the question is already put forward as one of annexation of Cuba to the Mexican republic, while among the Dominicans, at home and in the revolutionary service in Cuba, it assumes the form of a West Indian confederation. No word of annexation to the United States is breathed by the Cuban revolutionists, and thus far President Cespedes seems to have carefully abstained from sending an authorized agent to Washington. This arises from the opinion prevalent in Cuba and among Cubans elsewhere that in former efforts to attain independence, whenever they have confided their hopes and views to members of the Washington Cabinet, from Fillmore's time down to that of Buchanan, they have been betrayed to the Spanish government, and have found the government of the United States their most persistent enemy. Whether the new political combinations now germinating in the countries south of us will crystallize into something effective and tangible yet remains to be seen, but our government will do well not to close its ears and its eyes to the voices and signs that come to us from Cuba, Mexico and St. Domingo.

As regards Cuba the subject of most interest to us now is the course of the revolution and the character of the men who control it. The continuous efforts of Spain for four months to subdue the revolution have been futile, and the blow recently struck with such great cost and effort at Bayamo, the seat of the revolutionary government, has fallen harmless upon the insurgents and useless to the Spanish government. President Cespedes, after sending the women, children and prisoners to a place of safety, on the approach of the Spanish troops set fire to the town, and when remonstrated with for the act by some of his followers replied:—"Myself and my family are the greatest losers by the measure which as your chief I have decreed." His example in personal sacrifice has been imitated in Puerto Principe by the Marquis of Santa Lucia, the Count of Villamar and other wealthy Cubans who have personally taken the field and thrown their lives and fortunes into the war. Such men, when upheld by the popular voice, as these are, seldom fail. Had the wealthy natives of the Western Department followed the example of their countrymen in the eastern and central portions of Cuba the resources of the Spanish authorities would have collapsed before now, and the struggle, except so far as regards a few fortified ports, would have been at an end.

These results have been obtained with little, almost no outside assistance, and the period of the year is approaching when European troops, even if Spain could send them, can do little in the tropical field of Cuba. But the policy pursued by President Cespedes in his military operations defies even the strongest efforts the Spanish troops can make. In no instance have the revolutionists accepted battle. On the approach of the troops the insurgents retire from the front and confine themselves to harassing operations upon the flanks and rear of the advancing column. Thus every victory announced by the Spaniards is a Pyrrhic victory. Around the places held by Spanish garrisons guerillas hover, who keep the troops shut up in close quarters, and with no enemy sufficiently visible to tempt a sortie. The recent announcements of a formal attack on the city of Baracoa and the capture of Puerto Principe are the principal efforts yet made, and they indicate the growing strength of the revolution and increasing confidence among its leaders.

We may therefore assume that the government of President Cespedes has become a government *de facto*, and that it will soon appear before the Cabinets of America and Europe with its claim to national and belligerent rights. Spain, occupied with her own domestic troubles, has not the power to assert her ancient claims, and in this age of steam and the telegraph she cannot carry on another thirty years' exhausting struggle against rebellious colonies. It will be well, therefore, for us to consider the questions arising out of the new complications of the Cuba question. The development of a West India confederation or an intimate alliance between Cuba and Mexico may not threaten us with danger, but they will introduce new and troublesome complications in the field of American diplo-

macy, and we should take care that these be not hurtful to the interests of our commerce and our people.