

Mr. Sumner Boxing the Compass.

The learned Senator from Massachusetts begins to find himself in a quandary on the Cuban question, and is shifting from one point to another to make it appear that he is consistent in his inconsistencies. A short time ago he placed his opposition to the Cuban cause and the recognition of the Cubans by the United States on the ground that slavery had not been abolished by the insurrectionary government, or that there was no evidence to that effect. This appeared to be the only or principal cause for his opposition, for he intimated that if he were satisfied that the Cubans had abolished slavery he might give them encouragement or support. This seemed to be the *sine qua non*, and it was quite consistent with Mr. Sumner's life-long hostility to slavery and special regard for the negro. Well, overwhelming evidence came, and that in official form—in the constitution of the Cuban government—that slavery was abolished and would only exist where Mr. Sumner's Spanish friends held the power to maintain it. True, the Senator pretended to disbelieve this for some time, though everybody else acknowledged the fact.

Driven from this untenable ground, the Senator next pretends that there is no evidence of war, worthy of being so called, in Cuba. In refutation of this assumption General Prim acknowledged publicly in Spain that the Spanish government had been compelled to send forty thousand troops to Cuba, and that the shipment of more has been constantly going on. This looks something like war, though Mr. Sumner pretends not to see the fact. Indeed, Spain has been straining all her efforts for some time to put down the insurrection. But if there were no war, or an insignificant one merely, why build thirty gunboats in the United States, and why send out large armies and fleets to operate in and around Cuba? The assumption that there is no war, or only an insignificant one, is ridiculous in the face of such facts, and it is surprising how a man in Mr. Sumner's position could insult the common sense of the American people by the statements he has made. Then, the news we are receiving from time to time, though mostly through Spanish sources, shows that a serious war, covering a large part of the island, is going on, and that, though the Cuban patriots wisely follow that exhaustive policy of guerilla warfare which is best for them, and which nearly all people fighting for their independence have followed, they are a match for their enemies whenever they meet them in the field, and that they have been gaining ground and strength all through the fifteen months' contest. The mere assertion of Mr. Sumner or of any one else that the insurrection is growing weaker proves nothing, is without foundation and contrary to the facts. Indeed, all the evidence goes to show that the insurrection, as was said, grows stronger from month to month.

Now the Senator changes his ground again. Not daring to declare boldly that he is the friend of the Spaniards, or that he is opposed to a people heroically struggling to free themselves from the most atrocious despotism on earth—for such an avowal, though true, would shock the American people—he now says he does not want Cuba to become a part of the United States or the Cubans to be annexed. He prefers that the island and people should belong to Spain, no matter how cruel the despotism over them or how they may suffer. And this is the pretended great apostle of liberty; this is the man who has heretofore pretended to sympathize with all people struggling for freedom; this is the ancient champion of negro emancipation. He has no bowels of compassion for the eight hundred thousand white people of Cuba who have been ground to the dust by Spanish tyranny, and he seems no longer to have any hostility to negro slavery as long as it is maintained by Spain. He does not want the Cubans annexed because they speak a foreign language, and, as he says, because the mass of them know little about our customs or institutions. Does Mr. Sumner not know that nearly all the leading Cuban patriots—the men to whom the people look up for guidance—the men who must control the destiny of Cuba should it become free—were educated in the United States and understand our institutions well? Does he not know that the Cubans stand second to none in intelligence of all the Spanish-American populations of North and South America? Mr. Sumner was not so particular about making American citizens of ignorant people when he put the ballot in the hands of the negroes of the South and made legislators of those who hardly knew their right hands from their left.

But away with such subterfuges, for they are nothing else. Mr. Sumner, it seems, is opposed to all progress of the United States southward—to the acquisition of any territory in that direction. What a pity Cuba could not be moved bodily and hitched on to Massachusetts! That would make all the difference in the Senator's sympathies and views about liberty. Yet he talks about the destiny of this country in ultimately absorbing the West Indies, though it is certain he intends to put a drag upon that destiny as far as he has the power. What a mass of inconsistencies a man runs into when his objects are in conflict with his professions or theories! Who does not know that this great country, the Rome of the New World, can absorb, educate and make good citizens of any or all the surrounding populations without detriment to our institutions or character? The Cubans would be a valuable, though a small portion of our population. The Americans would soon make their beautiful and productive island blossom as a rose and become a mine of wealth. Even now its productions and commerce are immensely valuable. We should have the sugar monopoly of the world, as we now have that of cotton. It would give a vast impetus to the revival of our mercantile marine and shipping interests, and it would give to the United States the strongest naval and military position over the Antilles, as a protection to our Southern and Gulf coast and as dominating all the countries bordering on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Yet this is the magnificent, rich and valuable island Mr. Sumner pretends to turn up his nose at. Let us hope the administration and Congress will have more wisdom and will take a more statesmanlike view of the matter than the shortsighted and prejudiced Massachusetts Senator.