

The newly accredited Minister of the provisional government of Spain enters upon the discharge of his duties at Washington at a critical period and under difficulties that will require the greatest skill and tact on his part to preserve friendly relations between the two nations. Complications of no ordinary kind must follow from the efforts of the Cuban people to establish their right of self-government and the sympathy which the American people entertain for every movement in behalf of popular freedom. But in addition to all this Señor Roberts will find that the history of his own government under the traditional policy of Count Aranda, who strongly opposed the American Revolution in 1777, presents an extraordinary record of antagonism to the United States, culminating in the recognition of the belligerent rights of our Southern rebels at an early period after the firing on Fort Sumter, and the persistent supply of the rebellion with arms, ammunition and war material from the port of Havana.

In addition to these great difficulties he will find himself isolated by the political theories he must necessarily defend among those of the diplomatic corps in Washington of similar language and religion. No one of the accredited ministers and representatives of the Spanish-American republics can sympathize with him in his public labors; for the great contest which his government is carrying on in Cuba is in direct antagonism with every impulse and feeling of the Latin communities on this Continent. To add to his trouble Cuba is coming in as the youngest member of the diplomatic corps at Washington, and will receive the honors usually conceded to that member in every family. In the emergency that attends Señor Roberts' new mission we advise him to strike out a new line of policy in Spanish affairs on this Continent. Let him arrange with President Grant for an effective support in the way of money, credit, and American sympathy for the new constitutional throne the provisional government is erecting in Spain, and turn over to us in return what the Spanish government now holds in Cuba and Porto Rico. The greatest proof of statesmanship is to recognize coming events and to prepare for them; and the coming event on this Continent is the close of Spanish rule in America.