

# WASHINGTON.

## THE POLICY TOWARDS CUBA.

### An Iron-Clad Fleet to Enforce Secretary Fish's Demand.

### Why General Sickles Lost the Mission to Madrid.

### The Senate Dissatisfied with the Foreign Appointments.

WASHINGTON, April 13, 1899.

#### The Cuban Question—The Probabilities of a War with Spain.

There continues to be great discussion here regarding the rumored hostile intentions of the administration towards Spain, growing out of the Cuban revolt. It is the general impression, backed up by semi-official statements, that war is almost certain to be the end of the late outrages by the Spaniards. The reported demand for the release of the Mary Lowell and of the passengers taken from the Lizzie Majors furnishes material enough for all the gossip and of course there is no end of the stories that are floating about. A circumstance of some significance is that a fleet of iron-clads is being fitted out in warlike fashion by order of Secretary Borne, and as Cuba seems to be the natural destination it is not to be wondered at that some considerable excitement should be occasioned. The two things placed side by side—Fish's demand and Borne's warlike preparations—leave no doubt that the latter are intended to back up the former in a way that will tell quickly and effectually should Spain refuse to comply with the requirements of our government.

#### A Growling Senate—The Millennium of Modest Patriots.

The Senators will adjourn probably on Wednesday, and will leave for their homes in anything but good humor. There is the greatest dissatisfaction among them about the general distribution of the patronage; but more especially about the foreign appointments, judging from the remarks of individual Senators. If the public could only put its ear to the keyhole of the Senate's doors while in executive session, it would hear a growling no good to more than one head of department. All the secretaries come in for abuse from the Senators, not excepting even the polite Lottwell, or the diplomatic Fish. The former is blamed probably because he has seen fit to turn out of office a number of female employes, particular friends of Senators and members, and the latter is denounced because out of the limited number of appointments at his disposal he could not accommodate everybody who sought a diplomatic or consular office. Nearly the entire batch of consular appointments has been sent in and the committee has reported favorably upon a comparatively small number, because they have not been able to ascertain where they come from or who they are, much less to arrive at any correct conclusion as to their fitness or unfitness for their positions. In order to expedite matters, the committee has parcelled the work out after the following fashion:—Mr. Chandler, the chairman of the committee, looks after all the nominations from the Western States; Mr. Corbett, of Oregon, does the same thing for the candidates from the Pacific coast; Messrs. Kellogg, of Louisiana, and Spencer, of Alabama, have charge of the appointments from the Southern States; Mr. Conkling looks after the Middle States, and Mr. Buckingham, of Connecticut, hunts up the records of the New Englanders. Every man is, of course, supposed to know all about his own section, or if his information does not extend beyond the limits of his own State he can, and almost invariably does, inquire of the Senators from whose State the nominee hails. Think of the amazement of some members of the committee, who, after turning over in their minds for hours the name of some candidate, and wondering who he might be, goes to the Senator who represents the State, and asks, "Who is John Smith or Tom Jones?" as the case may be, to meet with the curt reply, "Don't know, sir; never heard of him." "I thought he was your appointment, Senator," modestly persists the committee man. "My appointment! I haven't got a foreign appointment under this administration, though I have asked for several." "Well, then, what shall we do with this man?" asks the committee man. "Reject him, reject him, of course; I don't want him charged to my account." This is a specimen of the daily experience of the members of the Committee on Commerce in their search for knowledge under difficulties. Under these circumstances but one thing can happen, to wit, that a large number of the nominations now before the Senate for consular appointments will be rejected. The fact that the Senators themselves have not been consulted about these nominations does not contribute anything towards putting them in good humor about their confirmation. It may be noticed that a large number of the parties nominated have been credited to the several Territories. Heretofore it has not been customary to select from the Territories for foreign appointments until the States had their quotas. Several of the States have not even been recognized with a single appointment in the selection made by Mr. Fish. It has been discovered, however, that in the case of some of the States which have received more than their share, Illinois, for instance, resort has been had to carpet-bagging in the Territories, so that the surplus of the friends of Washburne and other powerful men with the administration might be taken care of. This may perhaps account for the fact that some States have not received their full share, while others have none at all.

#### Madrid Mission—How Sickles Lost It—The Acquisition of Territory by Purchase Still a State Department Hobby.

Apropos of this Cuban question, some interesting facts calculated to throw light upon Secretary Fish's policy have leaked out. It seems Fish, though at first opposed to war with Spain, for the reasons indicated in a former despatch, has all along been in favor of the purchase of Cuba. His idea has been that Cuba could be bought for a good round sum, and that, after all, it would be the cheapest way of solving the difficulty. To go to war, he believed, would be a more expensive way of obtaining possession of Cuba than to accomplish its purchase by peaceful negotiation. With this purpose before him Fish induced President Grant to throw Sickles overboard and to pick up Sanford as the man for the Spanish mission. Grant had promised Madrid to Sickles, of that fact there is not the slightest doubt, but Fish talked the matter over with Grant and finally got his endorsement of Sanford. In his argument with the President Fish talked pretty much in this style:—"Mr. President, I feel satisfied we can accomplish the peaceful purchase of Cuba; but the negotiations must be conducted with the utmost skill and the coolest judgment. Sickles is able, but he is quick tempered and impetuous. Under strong provocation he might spoil all our negotiations by an untimely display of anger and disgust at the conduct of some of the Spanish agents. Sanford, on the other hand, is remarkably cool, shrewd and wary. I know him thoroughly. He has great business tact and extraordinary control of his temper. He has also considerable experience already as a diplomat. Such a man we want to conduct negotiations for the purchase of Cuba, and, therefore, I ask for Mr. Sanford's appointment to Madrid. The acquisition of Cuba by purchase, even at what at first may seem an exorbitant figure, will prove the most economical matter in the end. War with Spain, coupled with England and France, who would be likely to espouse the cause of their sister kingdom, would involve us in vast outlays and require new and great sacrifices from our people, who already suffer quite enough." This is about the substance of Mr. Fish's argument, and it proved strong enough to cause the President to yield, though he had already pledged in the most positive manner the Madrid appointment to General Sickles. Of course I give these facts now, not as intended to indicate the present policy of Mr.

Fish, but what it was before he made up his mind to deal with the question in accordance with the popular wish. That Sanford would be a more skillful person to manipulate a delicate negotiation than Sickles is not conceded in well informed circles here. Sanford is generally known here under the soubriquet of the "sewing machine diplomat," from the fact that he is largely interested in contracts for the manufacture or sale of that very useful invention, which has superseded almost entirely manual stitching. He is not credited with any largeness of intellectual power, and as a diplomat is only particularly celebrated as a successful dispenser of good dinners which captivated the gastronomics of foreigners. This is believed to be a capital way to overcome aldermen or members of Congress; but to gain a great point in diplomatic strategy it is not regarded as precisely the thing. People say here that it was not very successful in the matter of the Alabama claims, and that though it overcame old Reverdy it had not the slightest effect upon the American eagle.

#### The Colored Ministers.

J. R. Clay, of New Orleans (colored), was nominated to the Liberian mission by Senator Kellogg, of that State; but Mr. Clay having declined, Senator Kellogg then secured the nomination of F. E. Dumas (colored) for that position.

#### Perry Fuller's Correspondence with Ewing.

It is said there are two letters in the Perry Fuller-Ewing correspondence, relative to the New Orleans Custom House, and the plans to defraud the revenue, which are even more spicy than the one already published. For some reason these letters have been suppressed by both parties to the lawsuit now pending; but it is asserted they will have to be brought out before the case is closed.

#### Assay of North Carolina Ores.

The Director of the Mint, during a recent visit to Charlotte, N. C., obtained specimens of ores from different mines in that vicinity, which were assayed at the Mint in Philadelphia with the following results:—

No. 1—Gold, \$18 50 per ton; No. 2—\$90 50 per ton, and silver, \$11 50 per ton; No. 3—Gold, \$15, silver, \$1 per ton; No. 4—Gold, \$20 50, silver, \$1 50 per ton; No. 5—Gold, \$2 per ton.

#### Personal.

James I. Christie yesterday received a promotion to Assistant Doorkeeper of the Senate.