

The News from Cuba and the Neutrality of Our Government.

The war in Cuba gathers intensity and character. There appears to be more formality in the military operations of the patriots, and the reports of Spanish victories come with less frequency and less bombast from Havana. Our special telegram yesterday advised us of the landing of a small expedition near the port of Gibara, and that fighting of a serious character has taken place in the jurisdiction of Cienfuegos and Trinidad, in which the Spaniards do not claim to have obtained their usually asserted triumph, with utter annihilation to their enemy. These are pregnant signs. The expedition reported to have landed is probably one of two which have left this country recently.

The first of these was under the direction of General Jordan, who was chief of staff to General Beauregard during the siege of Charleston, and left here about three weeks ago. It comprised an assorted cargo of munitions of war, with a good proportion of small arms and artillery, and carried something less than two hundred and fifty men. Its destination was Port Padre, on the northern shore of the island, about ten leagues west of Gibara, thirty leagues east of Nuevitas, which is the base of present Spanish operations in the Central Department, and thirty leagues distant from Guaimaro, the present residence of President Cespedes. The other expedition was a small one, organized at Key West by a number of students of the Havana University, and which was ready to leave Nassau on the evening of the 10th instant, on the steamer Salvador. It comprised a small cargo of arms and ammunition, with about one hundred and thirty young Cubans. Whichever of these two expeditions be the one that has landed in Cuba its material of war will be a welcome supply to the patriot forces.

The reports of serious fighting in the jurisdiction of Cienfuegos and Trinidad is the more remarkable in view of the fact that the Spanish Minister at Washington, a few weeks since, formally announced to Secretary Fish that the revolution was effectually suppressed in that region and would soon be extinguished throughout the island. This locality is the extreme western limit of the revolutionary movement to-day, and is contiguous to the Western Department of the island, where the Spaniards claim to have twenty thousand organized, disciplined and enthusiastic volunteers under arms. Any portion of these who are willing to take the field could be thrown in thirty hours by rail and steamer into Cienfuegos. The fact that a few ill-armed country bands should again be able to give the government trouble in this region would seem to prove either that they were not as effectually put down as the Spanish officials recently claimed they were, or that the thousands of mad volunteers in Havana are not so ready to take the field as they proclaim themselves to be.

It seems to us, as calm observers of the conflict, that while the proceedings of the Cubans are exhibiting more signs of organization and of operations customary in regular warfare the efforts of the Spaniards exhibit less vigor and resource than they did at first. In their stress they are placing greater reliance on the action of our government to deprive the Cubans of the material of war. Thus we see the strange anomaly that, while the Spanish officers are pushing undisturbed the construction of thirty gunboats in our shipyards, the Cabinet at Washington details a United States armed cutter to watch one little steamer in New York harbor because the Spanish officials suspect that she is preparing to go to Cuba. The ground for this action is the asserted requirements of the neutrality laws.

It will be well if the cold-blooded and cowardly Secretary of the State Department at Washington does not involve the administration of President Grant in a general burst of obloquy from our own people and subject it to the contempt of every Cabinet in the civilized world. The idea that seems to animate him is that the so-called neutrality laws of this country really bind the government of the United States to an alliance offensive and defensive with Spain to preserve the outrageous tyranny she exercises in Cuba, and that, too, at the very time when the Spanish people have, by a glorious revolution, overthrown it at home. In this policy Secretary Fish goes as far beyond the true policy which should animate the government, and the true feeling of the people of the United States, as he did when he so timorously stated that he wished to wait and see what England said about Senator Sumner's speech before he wrote the instructions of our new Minister to London.

The neutrality laws, properly interpreted, aim to restrain enthusiasts from getting up expeditions in our midst to introduce war in the peaceful dominions of our neighbors; but when domestic tyranny has forced an entire people to overthrow a despotism and establish a living and free government by the side of the shrinking form of misrule, no past diplomatic courtesies can ever be interpreted by a live or great statesman as obligating him to be false to the true interests of his own country and to the freedom-loving impulses of all mankind. Compared with a Canning, a Cavour, a Bismarck, or a Louis Napoleon, Secretary Fish shrinks to the dimensions of a pigmy in the presence of Titans. President Grant owes it to the dignity of this nation and to the reputation and honor of his administration to recognize the true law of our neutrality in this crisis, and to require that a petty and cowardly adherence to an illogical interpretation of forms shall not demean us in our own esteem and in the appreciation of the world by making us the effective ally of a hateful, despised and waning despotism.