

ish merchants against the plunder of the custom houses, accompanied with a request for the appointment of committees from among themselves to protect the revenues; then angry denunciations of the selfish greed of military leaders, and finally a determined expulsion of the whole system of colonial government and Spanish carpet-baggers.

In all this the acts of the Spanish volunteers in Cuba constitute the most sweeping condemnation of the government against which the Cubans have rebelled and an unanswerable justification of their revolution. Whatever may be the wishes or the aims of Spain and her partisans, the course of time cannot be rolled backward. Communities cannot be drilled like armies, and when an error has been committed in a social revolution the word of command "as you were" can never be obeyed by a whole population. These truths are as evident to the leaders of the Spanish volunteers in Havana as they are to the rest of the world, and they see clearly that the old despotism cannot be restored even in that portion of Cuba which the Spanish bayonet still rules. Already are they forced to contemplate the next step. Shall it be a reorganization of government as an integral portion of Spain, retaining power in the hands of resident Spaniards, with representation in the Cortes and a Captain General only from the metropolis? Shall it be a distinct autonomy like that of Canada, with local representation and only an executive connection with the mother country? Shall it be assimilation with revolutionary Cuba and an independent republic? Shall it be admission to the American Union to save the country from the horrors of civil war?

All of these propositions have been subjects of discussion in the conclaves of the leaders of the Spanish volunteers in Cuba, but we know of only two acts which have been arrived at—a countermand to Spain of the request for more Spanish troops and a committee to Porto Rico to meet the new Captain General. One thing we do see. In the impossibility to send money to Cuba which weighs upon Spain to-day the Spanish volunteers in Havana hold both the sword and the purse of Spanish power there. General Rodas must yield to their wishes or be as powerless as was General Dulce. In the midst of revolution and civil war the march of events is influenced by so many things, both of small and of great import, that prognostication is impossible. What we have to do, therefore, is to contemplate our own duty and examine if our conduct is consonant with its requirements.

The question is, has the administration recognized the magnitude of the events and met them in a spirit consonant with the wishes and the needs of the country? An effete despotism is expiring, new political forms are crystallizing, new national connections and complications are forming, and the territory which is the scene of these important changes is contiguous with our own, of great weight in our political and public economy, and holding an intimate relation with our national defence. More than this, our government, under the administration of President Monroe, nearly fifty years ago, officially communicated to the sister republics of South America the fact that Cuba was so intimately connected with the United States that we should not contemplate with indifference any change in its political status. With all these great events in view, and with this antecedent before us, we are compelled to reply to the great question they propound, and to say that the administration at Washington has not been awake to its duty and is not meeting the question in a spirit consonant with the wishes and the needs of the country.

Secretary Fish, true to the fossil spirit with which he was imbued in the timorous age of American polity, is tortured with fears of European complications in a purely American question. He is afraid to act; and to excuse his fears he tells the Cuban agents in Washington that action at this juncture might delay their triumph, while a partisan journal in this city, prompted for his defence, whispers loving words to the Spaniards, and quotes the pirate Semmes to show how great the debt we owe to generous, American-loving Spain. If our timorous Secretary wants to know the truth regarding our debt to Spain for her course during our late war we advise him to read in his own department the despatches of our Consul General Shufeldt at Havana, to obtain from Admiral Porter the communications from our naval commanders during that time and to look in the rebel archives for those of the Confederate Consul Helm to Jeff Davis. But these are paltry palaverings when great national interests are at stake. When nations are in the throes of change through successful revolutions the ordinary rules of diplomatic intercourse are suspended, and great national needs and duties rule the hour. The remnant of the power of Spain in America is crumbling rapidly away, and with our great material and moral power the pen of a living statesman at Washington could, and should, shape the new formations. But while fear of European complications sits at the helm in our national affairs and timidity sways our councils we can hope for nothing from that quarter. In such a juncture we can only appeal from timorous statesmanship to the valiant spirit and sympathetic impulses of the people. Those have recognized the belligerent rights of the patriots of Cuba, and through them must we shape coming events so that the nation's rights and the nation's weal shall be respected.

Spanish Affairs and American Rights.—The True Issue in the Cuban Question.

The aspect of Spanish affairs in America is singularly complicated and indicative of a weak cause; but it is not one whit more so than the course of Secretary Fish and his friends in defending the want of statecraft and skill which characterizes the action, or rather the absence of action, that marks the honorable Secretary's course in this important crisis in American questions. Cuba and Porto Rico alone remain to Spain of all her once vast American possessions. Learning nothing from the experience of Britain with her thirteen colonies, or from that of Napoleon with St. Domingo, she has, by a practice of the most detestable forms of government, long since driven all her continental possessions to assert their independence. For many years past she has retained the two islands we have named only by our friendly connivance and a barrier of ruthless bayonets. For a long period all the world except Spain has known that there was a limit to this piling on of steel, and that it was only a question of time when the constantly rising stream of public indignation should overtop the iron barrier, and then sweep it away in one resistless burst of revolution.

This time has arrived, and the events of the last eight months have demonstrated that the end of Spanish dominion in America has come. These events have developed alike in Spain and in Cuba, and in each with nearly identical result, a triumphant overthrow of a corrupt and detestable government. But in each the subsequent process of reconstruction has encountered obstacles which have imposed delay, although the candid observer cannot but recognize the great fact that the two communities must obey the law of the political and geographical scheme of which they respectively form a part. Unless the revulsion in Spain can successfully light the blaze of a democratic revolution throughout Western Europe the Spaniards must admit a monarchical reconstruction; while in Cuba, unless some European Power comes to the rescue of Spanish despotism, the Cubans must become republican in their forms and their aspirations. The march of events sustains these deductions. In Spain the establishment of a republic has become very doubtful, while in Cuba all who are not wilfully blind can see that it is an accomplished fact.

There is an additional event in the history of the past few days in Cuba which confirms the view we have taken. While Spain was throwing off the shackles of her rejected government she denied to Cuba the rights which she proclaimed for herself. No sooner were the new administrators of power installed in their places than hordes of new officials were hurried to Cuba to harass the people and eat out their substance. They came by ship loads and like a swarm of locusts fell upon all that was left to Spain in the island. The customs ceased to yield their revenue to the government; new taxes and official exceptions and *sabro conductas* were placed on sale, bringing in large sums, but not one dollar for the royal treasury; and the avenues of private speculation, which are so widely opened in a time of war, were thronged with the crowd of hungry officials. First came a protest from the Span-