

The country demands the early recognition of the belligerent rights of the Cubans, and it depends upon the administration whether the revolution be long or short. Recognition will at once expedite the end; failure to do so will only prolong the struggle and impoverish the country without preventing the consummation of the independence of Cuba.

#### Cuba and the Administration.

The interchange of compliments between General Sickles and Marshal Serrano on the official presentation of the credentials of the former as Minister to Spain have been reported by telegraph. Save the commonplace assurances of continued good feeling and cordial relations nothing transpired during the ceremony to predicate an opinion in regard to the management of the Cuban question. What special instructions our Minister may be entrusted with and how he proposes to deal with the important subject remain among the secrets of diplomacy to be revealed in the future. In the meantime any consideration of the question leads one, in default of other information, to accept as a basis of settlement the reported policy of the administration. This is to induce Spain to sell Cuba to the Cubans, and the United States to become guarantee for the payment of the sum of money agreed upon. This, as a matter of course, presumes that the Cubans would like to purchase. Considered in a humane point of view this arrangement is no doubt very desirable as an effective means for putting an end to the revolting scenes of crime and carnage that have characterized the war. We have previously expressed the opinion that such a policy possessed the advantages of practicability and might prove the best that could be pursued under existing circumstances. The progress of events, as developed in late accounts from Cuba, justifies the belief that the revolution is growing in strength and will be continued just so long as the Spaniards may see fit to attempt the subjugation of the patriots. Indeed, there seems to be absolutely little or no chance for Spain to maintain authority over the island; and the ultimate independence of Cuba may be accepted as inevitable by the authorities at Madrid, since it is regarded as no very remote contingency by the resident Spaniards on the "Ever Faithful Isle." Stubborn as Spain may be to this sacrifice of national pride, and however loath she may feel to surrender a possession from which she has long derived an enormous revenue, the utter hopelessness of the struggle must become apparent to the government and will doubtless operate powerfully in influencing a decision to sell for a handsome promise to pay endorsed by the United States.

But supposing Spain concludes to accept a proposition to sell coming from our government, there are other questions and conditions which it would be well for the administration of General Grant to consider. The first and most important one is, do the Cubans desire to make purchase of a country to which they hope ere long, and with very flattering prospects, to make good their claim to ownership by the force of arms? After the sacrifices already made, the progress towards a consummation of the end for which they are struggling, and the assurances of triumph at no distant day, the patriots of Cuba may reasonably conclude that the additional cost of blood and treasure necessary for the completion of the work of independence is preferable to a compromise which involves an immense debt to Spain and perhaps other conditions equally embarrassing to the United States. Whatever may be the relation of free Cuba to our country—whether the Cubans are striving for early annexation or not—we must appreciate a sentiment which would prefer that the election of such relation be voluntary and spontaneous, unembarrassed by outside pressure or the obligations arising from a surety contract to this government.

We are not prepared to state whether or not the administration, if the reported policy above mentioned be really true, took occasion to consult the agents of Cespedes in regard to the proposed purchase; but it is quite probable, from the manner in which General Grant and Cabinet have been treating the Cuban difficulty, and inasmuch as neither the belligerent rights nor the official authority of the representatives of the patriots have been openly recognized, that they would not take the trouble to ascertain their wishes in regard to any projected scheme, and are acting simply upon their own responsibility. If such be the case the question arises would it not be as well to negotiate for the direct acquisition of the island by the United States? Proud Spain would surely feel less humiliated in selling to us than to the Cubans; and as "the United States now more than ever appreciate the traditional amity of Spain, as animated by new sympathies and a common participation in constitutional liberty," what would tend more to "increase the amity so happily existing between the two peoples" than a transaction implying a national obligation to the extent of a respectable number of millions, relieving the Spanish government of the hopeless task of subjugating the insurgents and replenishing a suffering exchequer?

Another subject for the consideration of the administration, in the event of the Cubans desiring to purchase and Spain consenting to sell, may be found in the possible future annexation of the island to the United States, and the probable condition of that annexation being the assumption of the debt to Spain. Or, in case of inability or failure to pay on the part of Cuba, would not our government require a cession of the island as indemnification for purchase money to be paid to Spain? Such are a few of the questions suggested by the "reported policy" of the administration. Lastly, we submit, may it not be as well to await the result of the revolution before either attempting to purchase ourselves or becoming surety for others? Our national debt is quite large enough without increasing it by assuming a promise to pay for that which in due time will come to us without money and without price.

Whatever be the result of the instructions given to General Sickles in regard to the action of our government, it is our duty to see that the contest in Cuba, if continued, shall be conducted on more humane principles, and, above all, steps should be taken to protect the rights of our citizens and prevent those outrageous executions occurring too often without trial and without crime on the part of the sufferers.