

CUBA AND SPAIN.

Mr. Sumner is credited with the opinion, by no means novel, that if the Cuban war goes on the island will be a waste. We have uttered that text any time in the last three months, and the war keeps due on, and Cuba is becoming more and more desert in such parts as the war overides. In the south-eastern part of the island, in the large district known as Camaguey, and in the later theater of war round about the jurisdiction of Villaclua, a very great number of sugar-mills have doubtless been destroyed. About the disposition of either side in the war to burn and lay waste there is no question now, and all that is needed to verify the common apprehension that the island will be ruined is that the war shall continue to its end. A speck of news makes it appear that Secretary Fish would be willing to buy it out for two millions. That is not too high a bid, but of course we have no idea that our premier has gone into bargaining. At the figures cited the Cubans could purchase themselves and sell again with a profit. But the islanders have shown a disposition to struggle which is above price, and may now be more earnest in wishing to prolong the fight than Spain can be in her half-professed desire not to sell. We may hear some day whether Gen. Dulce makes good his word that the island is virtually conquered, or whether a price has been put upon it. Señor Roberts may then inform us; but, if he knows no more about the matter than he knows respecting the army of Spain, we shall consider him untrustworthy. He is reported as saying that there are but 12,000 Spaniards under arms in Cuba, whereas we feel almost statistically sure that, in volunteers, garrisons, and troops in the field, there are three or four times that number. The several lying organs of the Government in Havana say seven and eight times, for which reason alone we are glad that Señor Roberts is moderate and modest. If he errs, he errs self-disparagingly, and therein commits a fault which, for the Castilian credit, leans to virtue's side.

Mr. Wendell Phillips, it appears, cherishes the faith that it is not best for Cuba to attempt her annexation until she has essayed the experiment of a West Indian confederation. Whether tropic growths in politics are so rank as to dwarf or kill this virgin idea is a question that will suggest itself to the general la-

dian and Northern mind. Nothing could please us better if it could be done, and done wisely and not wildly. Whatever be the issue, we are bound to learn the virtue of waiting, and our revolutionary neighbors that of trying. Meanwhile, it may strike close observers of the Cuban mystery that there are, indeed, a few grains of truth in the rumor of the secret desire of Spain to sell. Rather in proof of the desperation of the Spanish cause was the fact that the Home Government had been urged months ago to arm generally the blacks of the island; and now, though Gen. Dales is proclaiming conquest, we take it that the poor purse of Spain is enfeebling her sword. Either the Cap'tain-General, for a wonder, speaks the precise truth, or this is the fact of the case. The loss of Cuba as it is, is not, of course, the greatest which the Mother Country could morally sustain. The irreverable alienation of the island would be a loss unquestionably to oppression, Bourbonism, official stupidity, and robbery and terrorism--all maintained in Spanish politics by nothing so much as the school of indolence and plunder erected in Cuba as an asylum for Spanish incurables. But the republic in Spain would be comparatively the gainer. The strength which she has not to spare would be returned to her own body to the breeding up of freedom, instead of being wasted on an irretrievably injured province. The downfall of her power in the Western World might prove a crushing blow to all those elements of dominant disorder and disease which have brought about the ruin of her fairest possessions. If Spain is only taught how to govern herself, Cuba is well lost.
