

THE CUBAN PROBLEM.

The Government has not yet found cause or occasion to concede to the Cubans belligerent rights. Such is the substance of an important declaration made to-day from Washington. The authorities there, it is said, have no proof positive that the Cubans have been able to hold a single town, [or any official advice that the opposing forces in Cuba have ever met in the open field. There is a further avowal that while the Spanish Minister has been frankly told that the United States sympathize with Cuba, he has also been assured that they hold themselves bound to enforce the legal neutrality. Our authorities have been selling surplus arms to all buyers without asking questions, and we suppose that Cubans and Spaniards have alike had chances to buy.

The course of the Government has been evidently inspired by caution and fairness. But we have to take serious exception to one of the statements which have been made apparently with semi-official assumption. Surely our Government knows better than to have said or to have quite believed that neither of the parties in the island have fought in the open field. Cuban, Spanish, and American testimony has been given of the fact that they have fought battles, severe enough, considering the nature of the country and the forces on both sides. The opinion is general, grounded on the best evidence that can be extracted from Cuba, that the encounters in the Sierra Cubitas, at Las Tunas, and lately at Puerto Padre, rose to the rank of battles. We grant that the Government may have no official advice of this fact—but has it any to the contrary?—has it, in fact, any specifically official advice whatever that we may take as authoritative? We have no agent with the Cubans, and it appears to be not safe to believe the Spaniards. In short, it is a very fair question whether the Government has any agent in Havana capable of giving it certain or trustworthy information of the Cuban revolution. What is so far hinted to us only seems to show that the informants of the Government are either not sufficiently self-possessed, or are not enabled by circumstances to find out what to believe.