

Proposed Recognition of Cuban Belligerency—Important from Washington.

The action of Congress with regard to Cuba begins to assume a tangible shape. Senator Sherman, one of the most cautious, prudent and able men in the Senate, made a bold movement yesterday for the recognition of Cuban belligerency. He offered a resolution to the effect that the United States recognize a state of war in Cuba, that belligerent rights be extended to the insurgents, and that hereafter the United States will strictly observe the rules of international law applicable to belligerents. Up to the present time there has been merely a sort of guerilla fight in Congress on this Cuban question. A few Senators and members of the House, irrespective of party, have submitted resolutions for acknowledging belligerent rights to the Cubans, or for acknowledging the independence of Cuba, and have made speeches on the subject. Both the Senate and House have been very courteous to these advanced friends of Cuba, and have even set aside the rules for the purpose of hearing them. This showed that the sentiment of Congress has been favorable to the Cuban cause. But no decided action has been taken, and the resolutions were referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. All this appears to have been only preparatory to a more decided movement, and the delay was caused, probably, by a desire on the part of Congress to act, if possible, in concert with the administration. It looks now as if Congress is weary with the pro-Spanish policy, weakness, timidity and delay of the administration, and is resolved to act independently. When a man of the ability, standing and weight in the Senate of Mr. Sherman takes up the Cuban question so earnestly we may be assured something will be done, and that the administration will be compelled, however reluctantly, to carry out the wishes of the people as expressed through their representatives. We regard this movement of Mr. Sherman as the most important one for Cuba that has taken place in Congress.

In offering the resolution referred to Mr. Sherman remarked that the people in his section of the country would not much longer tolerate the coldness at present exhibited by the government towards a people struggling for independence, and that the same aid should be allowed the latter as is now afforded to Spain. This was plain talk and went to the root of the matter. The Senator recognizes the power of public opinion and the right of the people to have their will carried out, while at the same time he rebukes the administration for its coldness and unpopular conduct. Mr. Sumner, of course, came to the rescue of his Spanish friends, and showed his usual obstinate hostility to the Cubans. He said the Committee on Foreign Relations were now considering this whole question. But we can imagine what the result of their deliberations may be if he, as chairman of the committee, can control their action, for he asserted that they had been unable, up to the present time, to obtain any facts which indicated the existence of war. Everybody except Mr. Sumner and a few other enemies of Cuban liberty knows that there is a state of war existing. It is an insult to the common sense of the American people to make an assertion to the contrary. Indeed, Mr. Sumner knows very well that a fierce, determined and cruel war exists, though he pretends to say it does not. As Mr. Sherman properly remarked, what were the thirty gunboats built by Spain in this country for, if no war existed? He might have added, what were the forty thousand troops and large naval force sent out from Spain and the large force of volunteers in the island put under arms for, if there were no war? And does not the eighteen months' struggle of the Cubans show that it is a determined fight, and that Spain, with all her large resources, has proved herself unable to terminate it? Did not the utter defeat of Puello's army by the Cubans under General Jordan prove that a war of some magnitude is going on? Considering the nature of the contest, the area over which it is spread, the relative forces of the combatants and the means of the Cubans, the battle at Guaimaro was an important one, and, relatively to circumstances, equal to some of the principal battles of our late war. We must not measure the battles of a country numbering a million or a million and a half of people with those of a nation with forty millions. Besides, in a war of a colony for independence, particularly as the Cubans are situated, the best policy is to avoid as much as possible pitched battles and to wear out the enemy by exhaustive Fabian tactics. Our seven to eight years' war for independence was wisely carried on for the most part in this way. But this is no evidence that war does not exist in Cuba. The Cubans have shown that they are able to carry on the struggle, and we have seen that Spain has made the greatest efforts to end it without succeeding. Indeed, it is evident the Cubans are stronger to-day than they ever were. These facts are sufficient to convince any one that war exists, and that the Cubans have great reason to hope for ultimate success. But Mr. Sumner is too obstinate, too hostile to the freedom of Cuba and too much wedded to Spanish interests to acknowledge the truth. Let us hope Congress, and even the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which he is chairman, will pay no attention to this egotistical, prejudiced and narrow-minded man.

Mr. Sherman might well say that the people in his section of the country would not much longer tolerate the coldness exhibited by the government toward a people struggling for independence. The sturdy republican character and love of freedom of the Western people must be seen in such an issue. Yes, the people of the United States everywhere, except a few worshippers of Europe and European institutions, and such toadies to aristocracy as we sometimes see in Massachusetts, are heartily in favor of Cuban independence. To resist the will of the people in this, as the administration has done and as Mr. Sumner does, is an assumption which cannot be tolerated, and is opposed to the spirit of our republican institutions. The heart of the nation swells with sympathy for the cause of freedom and hates such monarchical despotism and cruel oppression as is seen in Cuba. Any administration or public man that opposes the generous impulse of the American people in favor of liberty or that sustains the monarchical despotism of Europe on American soil will sink

into contempt and irretrievable disgrace. It has been said that Mr. Sumner declared the recognition of the Cubans would be considered by Spain a cause of war. The recognition of belligerent rights under such circumstances has never been so regarded, and is not cause for war. If Spain has ever intimated that she should regard it in that light, that was mere bombast to frighten our timid Secretary of State. But if our government has been restrained from recognizing the Cubans from fear of war with Spain, that is enough to make every American citizen blush with shame and indignation. Think of this mighty republic not daring to do what is right—not daring to favor the cause of republican freedom in America—from fear of war with a nation like Spain! How humiliating! A war with Spain would be mere pastime for us, and we should indemnify ourselves by seizing all that she has left in America. War or no war, let us terminate this Cuban difficulty, now the opportunity is presented; for we have had trouble enough about that island. Cuba should belong to the United States. It must some day. There never has been, and never will be, probably, a better opportunity. In fact, all our government has to do is to lift its heavy hand off the Cubans and give them a fair chance, and they, with the aid of our own sympathizing citizens, will settle the question.