

The People.

VOL. V, NO. 45

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1896

PRICE 3 CENTS

EDITORIAL

The Way To Make Him Understand

By DANIEL DE LEON

Congressman Morse of the Plymouth district of Massachusetts is not ready to recognize the belligerency of the Cuban insurgents. "I do not understand," he says, "what there is in Cuba to recognize; the insurgents have no government, no constitution, no port of entry."

It is a well-known trick of detectives, when they suspect a suspicious character of sailing under a false name, to have someone suddenly cry out in his neighborhood the name he is supposed to be hiding. If the suspicion is correct, the suspect will, ten to one, start up and thus give himself away. The ancient classic story tells how the warrior Achilles was detected in the prince's home where he was hiding in female attire with the women folks. Ulysses entered the palace in the disguise of a peddler and exhibited to the women his wares—beads, laces, and combs. The actual women showed much interest in the knick-knacks, only one seemed uninterested. To make assurance doubly sure, Ulysses then, as if by accident, uncovered a sword. The women jumped back, but Achilles grasped the weapon with avidity and flourished it. This act betrayed him. Again, there is an old myth that has come down as a nursery tale of a cat having been transformed into a princess, and, her evil genius being set upon to expose her, took occasion to set a mouse loose in the midst of a ball: all the women ran away, but the nature of the transformed cat prevailed over appearances, she leaped upon the mouse, the spell was broken, the cat-princess became a cat again, and was chased back into the kitchen. So should the sternness of Representative Morse towards "rebels" be brought to the test.

Representative Morse is a manufacturer of a certain stove polish; to promote the sales of his stuff he leaves unturned no stone; even in his church, of which he is an elder, he fails not in his exhortations to allude to the wonder of his goods. All that the Cuban belligerents need to do is to convey to "Rising Sun" Morse information about the increased chances of selling his stove polish in Cuba just so soon as the Spaniards are put out. If the insurgents get into the papers some statements to convey the

impression that the Spaniards use few if any stoves, whereas the rebels dote on stoves, they will see Morse suddenly “understand what there is in Cuba to recognize.” Like the man who sails under a false name, starts at the sound of his own, or the warrior snorts for battle, despite his woman’s disguise, at the sight of a sword, or the cat transformed into a princess suddenly drops her courtly manners and becomes cat again at the sight of a mouse—so will the opinions of U.S. Congressman and stove-polish manufacturer Morse undergo a complete transformation so soon as he can see “a bargain.”

The prospect of a sale, of selling both a bit of merchandise and its purchaser, is the loadstar of the capitalist; it is the one thing that sways his judgment and his actions, his morality and his religion.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded March 24, 2003