

The Cuban Question—Spain, France and England.

The press of France and England is very much occupied with the Cuban question and the conduct of the United States with regard to it. One day it admits that the only solution is in accepting the mediation and offer of the American government for the independence of Cuba; another day it calls upon Spain to denounce the officiousness of America and claims the right of French and British interference in any settlement that may be made of the Cuban difficulty. This hostile attitude to the action of the United States is the last phase of sentiment expressed by the European press. The question naturally arises here, what is the cause of this change of tone? Why this condemnation of America "for intermeddling" with Cuba and call upon the Spanish government to "resist the interference?" We think General Prim's presence in Paris accounts for it all. We published yesterday a cable telegram from Europe to the effect that the General had a conference with the Spanish ambassadors to England and France on the subject of communications from Washington, and that the disposition of the United States to interfere in the affairs of Cuba was denounced at this conference and the hope expressed that "Spain would reply energetically to the officious manifestations of the Americans." True, there is another telegram from Paris of the same date contradicting the statement of what took place at the conference, but this has all the marks of an afterthought and of a prudent political dodge. From the present tone of the French press it seems probable that General Prim has seen Napoleon, or, at least, that the Cuban question has been discussed, directly or indirectly, between them. It has been urged, too, that France and England are deeply interested in the destiny of Cuba, and that in any settlement which may be made of the present difficulty the United States should not alone be consulted, and that these two Powers must have a voice in the matter.

At the bottom of all this we see the old jealousy of the progress and power of the United States revived. It is the same monarchical, aristocratical and anti-republican spirit which during our civil war led to the invasion of Mexico and the attempt to establish a monarchy on this Continent; the same that has influenced England throughout the whole course of her inimical policy towards this country. Yet one would think the French might have learned the folly of hostility to American sentiment and progress in their fatal Mexican experiment, and that the English would have been taught the futility of attempting to arrest our progress and destiny. But the jealousy and hostile feelings of governments, as well as of people, make them blind. They look at everything through a false medium, and see only what they wish.

If the Emperor Napoleon desires to complicate the question of Cuba and to create difficulties between Spain and the United States he can do so only at the cost of Spain. It

might plunge that country into further trouble and an enormous expense, but it would not change the policy of this country or the destiny of Cuba. Indeed, the opposition or hostility of France or England would have the effect of arousing the American people and government to prompt and decisive measures for the independence of Cuba. And if England imagines that we should be deterred from recognizing the independence of Cuba or from participating in the expulsion of the Spaniards from the island for fear of damaging our case in the Alabama claims she is greatly mistaken. Cuba is a live question—the question of the day. It is no longer so with the Alabama claims. Not that we abandon them; they are simply laid aside for the present. We can bring them up at some future time, when it suits us and when the best opportunity occurs. Mr. Sumner may want everything put aside for that question to gratify his vanity, because he made a flaming speech on the subject and because that is his special hobby; but it is not so with the American people, Congress or the administration. With them the independence of Cuba is the question of the day. The solution of that cannot be long deferred. The Alabama claims we can settle at our convenience. Besides, Cuba will be worth far more to the United States than the amount of those claims. Should England, France, or even the Spanish Regency, suppose it can change the policy and course of the United States with regard to Cuba it is mistaken. Or should General Prim, who was once a liberal and the friend of Cuba, suppose he can intrigue successfully for the interposition of the European Powers in the Cuban difficulty he will find that his labor will be in vain.

The American people have determined—and we have no doubt the government has resolved—that Cuba shall be free, and all the intrigues or efforts to prevent that will prove unavailing.