

SPAIN AND CUBA.

Suppose the United States and Spanish Commission admit the claims of our citizens for damages arising out of the Cuban revolution, what are we to gain by their decision? American citizens whose estates have been seized by the Spanish officials in Cuba have repeatedly brought their wrongs to the notice of the State Department, with all the necessary proofs. The Government at Madrid has acknowledged the justice of some of these claims, and has ordered the restitution of the sequestered property. The "semi-independent but irresponsible agents" at Havana have refused to obey the home authorities, and the spoliation still goes on. Will the decision of the mixed Commission do us any good? As a preliminary to the substantiation of our claims against the Spanish Government the action of this Court is of course important. But in the meantime the individual sufferers are exposed to constantly increasing hardships, and what with the proverbial Spanish procrastination and the equally proverbial Spanish poverty, their prospect of relief is distant indeed.

There is no doubt that Spain has lost control over her own party in the "ever faithful island" almost as completely as over the revolutionists who for three years have set her at defiance. She has no power to make herself obeyed in any part of the island. The lives and estates of all the residents, both native and foreign, except in the remote districts where the revolution still lifts its head, are at the mercy of the Volunteers, who hold themselves accountable neither to their own Government nor to any other. We cannot deal with them, because they are not an independent power. Spain cannot deal with them, because they will not mind her.

In this deplorable state of affairs, the work of devastation still going on, authority being at end, and foreign residents without protection, the question of friendly intervention recurs with fresh urgency. Can civilization do nothing to stop this wretched contest? We see but one hope either for Cuba or for Spain. The revolution has apparently exhausted its fighting strength, and can do nothing now but doggedly hold out and wait for help. The royal government has exhausted its available military force, nearly drained its treasury, and ceased to be respected by its own officers. Between the two has sprung up a third party—violent, cruel, reactionary, rapacious, plundering both sides, and robbing neutrals. It has no national character or purpose; it is merely a party of outlaws. There is no reason to believe that Spain can ever recover the island. She must give it up either to the Patriots or to the Volunteers. The easiest solution seems to be that proposed now by the Cuban agents in London—a sale of the island by the home government, not to any foreign nation, but to the Cubans themselves. It is represented that the revolutionists are ready to buy their independence, and it is believed that bonds for the purchase money can be negotiated in Europe. A proposal has been thrown out that the United States, in such a case, should guarantee the Cuban obligations, but this we do not approve; while we are taxing ourselves so heavily to pay off our own debts, we are not likely to assume those of other people. It may be that the scheme can be carried through without help from us in that form; and whenever it is fairly presented it will be the part of kindness to urge upon the Court of Madrid, with whatever persistency diplomatic courtesy may allow, that such an arrangement would be honorable to both sides, and an advantage to all the civilized world.