

can be turned or interpreted to that end. If the administration be disposed to favor the Cubans by letting the Hornet go there are precedents for that. The Cuban flag is recognized by several of the republics of America, and so far has a legitimate existence. The United States can act upon that fact, just as Spain and Portugal acted in the case of the Confederate privateers which went into and recruited in their ports when the Confederates had not been recognized by them as belligerents. The Hornet did not clear from nor become an armed vessel in our ports, and it is unnecessary to inquire into her previous history. It matters not where she was built or who she belonged to before. She cleared from a foreign port, took her armament and supplies on board at sea, and was at the time a Cuban vessel—the vessel of a belligerent Power that had been recognized by several independent nations. But whether the Hornet be condemned or allowed to go, the government may hereafter, and that soon, recognize the Cubans. Judicial or governmental action in her case need not influence the conduct of the administration in its future policy towards Cuba.

Whatever timidity the Secretary of State may exhibit on the Cuban question from a ridiculous fear of damaging our case in the Alabama claims, Congress is not likely to be afraid of that bugbear. Judging from our Washington despatches, which give the views of the Congressmen who arrive at the capital, and from the expressions of the leading public men of all parties, there seems to be no doubt that decided measures will be taken, as soon as Congress assembles, in favor of Cuba. Members will see, if Mr. Fish cannot, that there is no parallel between the case of England recognizing the rebels as belligerents at the very commencement of the war, and the recognition of the Cubans by the United States after a year of successful warfare. They will understand, if he does not, that this mighty republic has a comprehensive American policy to carry out regarding all the countries contiguous to ours, and they are not likely to lose the opportunity afforded by the struggle in Cuba to extend republican institutions in this hemisphere. The Alabama claims will not frighten them, for we can settle these at some future day when most convenient to us. They will not sacrifice the principle of American liberty and republicanism or neglect to seize a present and greater good for that which is of less importance and which can be safely postponed. No, they will say, if we may judge from the views of Congressmen and the strong current of public sentiment, Cuba first and the Alabama claims afterwards. We know what the opinion of the President is, and there is no doubt he will cordially co-operate with Congress in this matter. Still the question arises, ought not the administration to anticipate the action of Congress? Should it not endeavor to stop the bloody work in Cuba by such an energetic policy as would soon close up the war? There need be no fear of war with Spain. The Spanish government has not the means nor will it have the temerity to engage in such a futile and hopeless conflict. Prompt and bold action is demanded now of the administration on this Cuban question.

The Cuban Question and the Administration.

The Cuban question has become a very important one, and perhaps the most important of any that occupies the public mind or that the administration has to deal with. It is so in every point of view—national, international or political. It cannot be ignored, trifled with, or the settlement of it long deferred. We see in the seizure and detention of the Hornet both the judicial and international phase of the question prominently brought forward; in the action of the administration, through our Minister at Madrid, offering mediation with a view to the independence of Cuba, the desire and purpose of the government; and in the expressions of our public men and drift of popular sentiment the political aspect of the question. Everything is tending to an early decision one way or the other, and from these signs of the times there can be no doubt as to what that decision must be.

The administration has been exceedingly cautious and prudent, and has even placed itself in opposition to public sentiment, in the desire to uphold the honor of the republic in its international relations and to command the respect of the world for its moderation. It has subjected itself to the charge of timidity through this excessive prudence. There would have been a more decided expression of popular sentiment, and a greater pressure upon the administration for prompt action in favor of the Cubans, if the people had not relied upon the declared sympathy of the President and of the Secretary of State and other members of the Cabinet. Having confidence in this they have waited patiently, believing that the government would not disappoint their hopes and would recognize the Cubans without unnecessary delay. They have not believed even that Mr. Sumner's bugbear of the Alabama claims would hinder the administration from taking decided and prompt action in favor of the Cubans. But, as the old proverb goes, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." The delay of the government begins to create a restless anxiety and doubt of its courage and ability. A year has passed since the Cubans struck the first blow for independence. They have been gaining strength all the time, and that to such a degree as to call forth all the power of Spain to wage war against them. They are entitled to recognition as belligerents, at least, according to the law of nations and upon the principle of humanity, had we no other object in view. But when we consider the broad American policy which we have always proclaimed with regard to the freedom of people on this side of the Atlantic from European domination, and of the sympathy of this republic with all who are struggling for republican liberty, there is another and powerful motive for the prompt recognition of the Cubans.

How far the case of the Hornet, the action of the Spanish government, or the difficulties surrounding the Spanish gunboats at our shipyards may bring the administration to a speedy decision we cannot yet determine. The Hornet seems to have been turned over to the judicial authorities, but the decision in that case probably will be in accordance with the wish and policy of the government. In such questions having an international bearing the law is generally made elastic to suit the views and purposes of the government; for there are in almost all cases fresh circumstances that