

and still take its own time about recognizing the Cubans as belligerents or independent. Admitting the view we have taken of the question to be the correct one, the administration need not be embarrassed in the least. Then, again, it is insinuated that the government knew of the Hornet going into one of our ports, and that this is a part of the programme for bringing about the speedy recognition of the Cubans. The truth is, we think, the Hornet was in distress and compelled to put into some near port. The terrible storm that swept along our coast was sufficient to disable her or to exhaust a large portion of her coal. Of course, in the absence of more detailed information, this question cannot be decided; but the view we take appears to be the most reasonable one.

A few timid and shortsighted people appear to be alarmed at the idea of the United States recognizing the Cubans as belligerents. They imagine it may lead to a war with Spain. Why should such a recognition lead to war? Recognizing belligerents where the fact of belligerency exists, as in the case of Cuba, has never been considered by the nations of the world as a cause of war. Spain would not be so foolish as to make it so. Proud as the Spaniards are they would not be so crazy as to go to war with this country on such a question. There is another class of timid and shortsighted people—though a limited class—that fear the recognition of the Cubans would damage our case in the Alabama claims, and some such thought, perhaps, may have made the administration particularly cautious and slow about taking action in the matter. But there would be no parallel between the case of England recognizing the South at the beginning of the war and the recognition of the Cubans after they have carried on their war of independence over a year and have been gaining ground all the time. Besides, the circumstances in the case of Cuba and the conduct of the war there are very different to those connected with the rebellion in the South. However, all nations are governed very much by their interests in such cases, and we have in that of Cuba both the cause of republican liberty and a broad and comprehensive American policy to promote.

The Cuban Question Calmly.

As far as the policy and action of the United States are concerned the Cuban question is culminating. If we look at this question as it now stands—at the efforts of our government through General Sickles to obtain the independence of Cuba; at the declaration of our Minister to the Madrid government that the time is near when the United States will have to recognize the Cubans as belligerents; at public sentiment here; at the well known sympathy of the President, the Cabinet and Congress with the Cubans; at the increased activity of Spain to crush the insurrection; at the prolonged and so far successful struggle of the Cubans to acquire their independence, and now at the Cuban privateer, the Hornet, falling into the hands of the United States authorities, as well as at the difficulties surrounding the Enterpe and the Spanish gunboats in our waters—it is evident the administration is brought to a point when its policy and purpose with regard to Cuba must be made known. A purely negative policy is no longer possible, though an affirmative policy in favor of the Cubans would not necessarily lead to a rupture with Spain or to a participation in the struggle. The time is near when the United States must either recognize the Cubans as belligerents or abandon them to their fate.

The case of the Hornet may bring this question to a practical issue. At any rate it presents a very curious case and involves nice points of international law. It is admitted that this vessel is a privateer and under the Cuban flag. The argument is made on our side that as the United States have not recognized the Cubans as belligerents the Hornet must be regarded and treated as a pirate—as having, in fact, no recognized flag. But is this so according to the law of nations? The belligerency of the Cubans has been recognized by two independent nationalities and regular governments—by two American republics, and one, that of Peru, has recognized the independence of the Cubans. The flag, then, has a legitimate existence in a part of the world. It is for the United States government to say whether it will recognize and act upon that fact, although belligerent rights have not been accorded by itself to the Cubans, or will ignore the action of the South American republics. During the civil war in this country the Alabama and Shenandoah put into the ports of countries where the governments had not recognized the Confederates as belligerents. It will be remembered, for example, that one of these vessels, if not both, went into the port of Lisbon when in distress and for supplies, though Portugal herself had not formally recognized the belligerent rights of the Confederates. It was enough for the Portuguese government that other nations had done so. Other examples might be cited, but that is unnecessary. This is sufficient as a precedent, and, we think, sufficient to show the international law governing such cases. Can not the United States act upon this, then, in the case of the Hornet? Judging from our Washington despatch, published yesterday, the President and his Cabinet take this view of the matter. Twenty-four hours is the time allowed for a vessel of such a character to remain in a neutral port, though the time may be extended under extraordinary circumstances, particularly where the vessel has been detained and prevented from getting supplies by the authorities themselves. The international law or usage in such cases is based upon humanity, and the United States can properly act upon it without being subject to the charge of doing a hostile or unfriendly act toward Spain.

The Hornet, or Cuba, as it is now called, cleared from a British port (Halifax), and if even the British government could, under the law of nations, pursue and capture her, which may be doubtful, our government is neither required to do so nor to detain her, provided she leaves after the usual time allowed for getting supplies. Nor does it matter where this vessel had been or what ports she cleared from before. Her last clearance is the only one that can be considered. There are many speculations with regard to the Cuba putting into the port of Wilmington. Some intimate that there was treachery on the part of the officers and that Spanish gold was used successfully. This is very doubtful. Others think the object was to bring the government of the United States to a direct issue on the Cuban question; but this is not likely, as the government can either detain or let the Hornet go,