

The West India Naval Expedition—Spain and Cuba.

A formidable squadron of United States war ships—first class monitors, steam frigates, &c.—will soon be gathered in the West Indies. It will embrace the Dictator, the Miantonomoh, the Swatara, the Nantucket, the Severn, the Yantic, the Albany, the Powhatan, the Seminole, the Tuscarora, the Nipsic and the Kansas—a force sufficient, as Secretary Robeson has laughingly expressed it, to “blow up the whole Spanish navy.” Some of these vessels are now on the station, others have just gone down, and others will shortly follow. What is the object of this imposing warlike array? We are assured from Washington that it is not intended for the occupation of the black republic of Hayti, or the yellow republic of Dominica, or the Bay of Samaná, or anything of that sort; but that the design is to have this large force on hand in the West India waters “to be ready for anything that may turn up, and to act as a naval corps of observation.” The reason assigned for this powerful precautionary movement is that “the administration knows not what a day may bring forth” and is resolved to be prepared for any contingency.

We may reasonably infer that things are approaching a crisis in reference to Spain and the island of Cuba. The administration has failed to make any impression upon the government at Madrid in behalf of the Cubans. All the approaches of General Sickles to the Regency looking towards Cuban independence have been emphatically repelled. Spain will devote her last ship and her last man to the maintenance of her dominion over the island. She is resolved to subdue or exterminate the Cuban rebels by the bayonet, and they have resolved to expel the Spaniards by fire. We know that the sympathies of General Grant, meantime, are with the Cuban cause; but that he has not been clearly satisfied that, under the law of nations or the constitution, he can, upon his own judgment, concede them belligerent rights. We think it not improbable, however, that he has made up his mind to submit certain recommendations in his annual message to Congress in relation to Cuba, and that, in anticipation of affirmative action upon them by the two houses, he has thought it expedient to prepare for a possible rupture with Spain.

~~We cannot believe that General Grant is playing in this naval movement the puerile game of the King of France, who,~~

~~—with forty thousand men, Marched up the hill, and then marched down again.~~

On the other hand, when the administration “knows not what a day may bring forth,” we apprehend there is some ultimatum in view which may bring peace, but which is more likely to bring war. But, after all the general denials at headquarters, may not the real object of this expedition be the occupation, with authority from Congress, of the republic of Dominica on the basis of a treaty of annexation? We were given to understand at the last session of Congress that Dominica was ready to come into the Union, and Hayti, too, and their annexation was actually proposed through the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. We know that during the recess of Congress Baez, President of Dominica, has been kept pretty busy fighting the revolutionary party of Cabral, and that in Hayti the black dictator Salnave appears to be driven to his last ditch; but as the leading men of all parties and all colors in both divisions of the magnificent island of Hayti are desirous of annexation, we have only to say the word to the *de facto* governments to secure at any time possession of the whole island.

Hence we say that with all the general denials at headquarters of any purpose of occupation of Dominica or Hayti, or any part of either of those republics, by this great naval expedition, the object is, perhaps, to be on hand for the formal occupation of one or both, in anticipation of the early adoption of a treaty of annexation by the Senate, on the general terms of the annexation of Texas. Since the abolition of slavery and the establishment of civil and political equality in the United States the blacks of Hayti and the mulattoes of Dominica, for their future peace, safety and prosperity, desire annexation. Nor could a more decisive movement for convincing Spain that Cuba is lost to her be adopted than the annexation and occupation of the great neighboring island of Hayti by the United States.

At all events we expect that in the forthcoming message of the President to Congress we shall have such recommendations bearing upon both the islands of Cuba and Hayti as will speedily result in establishing the independence of the one, as a beginning, and the annexation of the other. Two States from the island of Hayti—one from Dominica, the Spanish speaking and mulatto republic, and one from the Haytien, the French and black republic—will have to be organized, and, looking to 1872, they will be quite an acquisition to the party in power at Washington, as will also be the State of Cuba.