

The Cuban Question Before the Government and the People.

The administration will do well to observe the popular instinct. That the public mind is in active and full sympathy with the Cubans, who are struggling to throw off the yoke of Spain, and to annex that fertile island to our political Union, no man who can read the signs of the times will doubt. The thronged public meetings which have been witnessed in many of our larger cities to express sympathy with the cause, the avidity with which intelligence from the island is sought for, and the prominent discussion which the leading journals in all parts of the country give to the question and its affiliating issues, all indicate that there is something more than a passing sentiment at work among the people. It is the unfailing indication that for Cuba the fullness of time is approaching when she must follow her destiny, no matter what courts or cabinets may think or wish. In all questions of national development the people are always in advance of their rulers, and these are ever compelled to follow, not to guide, the national will.

The little germ which less than one hundred years ago bourgeoned and blossomed in Independence Hall at Philadelphia has now grown to a stalwart nationality, abundantly capable to defend the principles of its life, as well as to provide for its own safety. In one shape or another, by violent or by peaceful means, the colonial system which marked the early age of American growth has given way before its development until at the present day but a small remnant of colonial rule is left in the New World. A few islands in the American Mediterranean and two or three insignificant communities around the delta of the Orinoco comprise the extent of European government in America. These stand more as picket posts than as valuable possessions along the coast of North America, from which American growth may be watched, and if need be may be checked or resisted in its advance.

It is this fact which the popular instinct is keen to appreciate and to destroy. However much the government may be bound by diplomacy or by treaties and their consequent legislation to respect the existing status of colonial rule, the public mind of America can never forget that our nationality was born in war against that system, and that our growth has ever been in opposition to it. Hence the feeling which our fathers exhibited in behalf of the Spanish-American republics, and that which is now found animating our people in favor of Cuba. When we were younger as a nation, and before our strength had fairly hardened into the bone and sinew, it was well for government to be prudent in its proclamation of principles and cautious in its defence of rights. Therefore we have no fault to find with President Adams because when the Cuban question first came up in 1826 he hesitated to proclaim the true principle of American growth. The Holy Alliance had but recently suppressed the liberties of Naples, Piedmont and Spain, and the time was not propitious. It was our forbearance, then, which gave to Spanish government in Cuba a new lease of life.

That lease she has cancelled by her own acts. Obstinate refusing to recognize the growing spirit of the age, she has consolidated

despotic government there, while England has wisely admitted the American idea into her American colonies. The natural result of American growth has followed. The people of Cuba have risen in arms and are to-day treading the winepress of freedom. Our people not only sympathize with them in their struggle, but the national instinct, ever quick, perceives that the time has come to drive out these European picket posts along our shore, and feels strong in the ability to do it. The national government may find complications to attend the argument, but these will disappear if it is true to the national feeling and the national instinct, that wants no more governments in America antagonistic to American ideas. Danger can arise only from the incompetency of the Secretary of State and his clinging to the precepts which governed John Quincy Adams' administration fifty years ago, while he forgets the immense advance the nation has made since that time. The administration of President Grant may safely do what Adams' could not—take its tone from the unerring instinct of the popular mind.