

The Spanish Gunboats.

The course taken by the government in regard to the Spanish gunboats indicates plainly a spirit of fairness toward Spain that ought to soften the asperity with which her agents here might naturally receive the announcement of the purpose of the administration. Spain and Peru are quite equal before us and have the same claims in regard to our neutrality. Spain was herself the first to appeal to our laws to prevent the sailing of ships. Her war with Peru, though in a practical state of abeyance, made her especially careful in regard to the armed forces of that nation, and when certain vessels were bought here for the Peruvian government the protest of the Spanish authorities prevented their sailing, and they finally did not sail, except on a sort of parole, our government exacting a guarantee that they should not be used against the power of Spain. Exactly what our government then did, on the application of Spain herself, it now does for Peru. Although nominally the Spanish vessels are seized, they are, in fact, only under the surveillance of the law. Thus those charged with their construction are left unembarrassed and the building and equipment of the ships go on. So that when the Spanish government has given sufficient evidence that these vessels are not intended for use against any Power with which we are at peace, it will be found that the action of our government has not caused a day's loss of time. Our hope for the interest of Cuba, however, is that in the meantime the administration, putting itself in full sympathy with the national sentiment on the subject, will see the propriety of recognizing the rights of the Cubans, and then if Spain gives guarantees that compel the withdrawal of the protest entered by Peru the Cuban government may take the place of Peru and enter another protest. Spain would then only have to lament the inconvenience to a nation of having on its hands more than one war at a time.