

Cuba—The Time for Action by the Administration.

Our European telegraphic news gives us a repetition of the old story of another tripartite arrangement or coalition of the Powers of Europe to secure the possession of Cuba to Spain. This time, it is said, that England, France and Austria have taken some action against the policy and views of the United States with regard to Cuba, and that in reply to a circular sent by Spain to the different nations, relative to the communication of the American Minister at Madrid, these great Powers have answered favorably to "the rights of Spain." It has been said even that they will form a coalition for sustaining Spain in "her rights." All this comes, too, at the time when General Prim has been having interviews with the Emperor Napoleon. Then, as a supplement to this news, and in a certain way to give color of truth to it, we are informed by a Madrid journal that General Prim had sent from Paris a telegraphic despatch to the Spanish government declaring that he would not hesitate at any sacrifice to subdue the insurrection in Cuba. Then, again, a portion of this news has been contradicted.

Now, the question arises, what do all these reports and this agitation signify or portend? Simply this, that the Cuban question has assumed an important character in Europe as well as in America, that Spain is troubled about it and looking round for support, and that it is fast culminating to a solution. It is the natural fermentation of ideas and interests on the subject on the eve of a crisis. Some of these reports, doubtless, are canards, or are manufactured from prejudice to the United States or for political purposes. Still there is at the bottom evident hostility to the mediation of the United States in Cuban affairs and to the proposed purchase of the independence of Cuba through our government. But this talk about a tripartite coalition is nonsense. Neither France nor England, and, least of all, Austria, will go into any such Quixotic enterprise. Whatever the feeling or wishes of the Emperor Napoleon and the British government may be with regard to the Cuban question, they will not risk any difficulty with the United States about it.

It will be remembered that a tripartite treaty of France, England and the United States to secure the possession of Cuba to Spain was proposed to this country during the administration of Mr. Buchanan, and that it was promptly and properly rejected by the United States. Times have changed greatly since that period. This mighty republic has developed a power and strength little dreamed of before. Napoleon burned his fingers too painfully in the imperial Mexican experiment to venture again upon any active interference in the affairs of America as in hostility to the American policy of the United States. England has too much at stake and is too wise to interfere, and she knows well enough that her interference would only arouse the American people and government to more determined action in favor of the independence of Cuba. As to the talk of endangering or weakening our position on the question of the Alabama claims, that is a mere bug-

bear. We are in no hurry to settle these claims. We do not and shall not admit that there is any parallel between the action of the British government in recognizing the belligerency of an integral portion of this republic and any action that we may take in the case of a neighboring American people fighting to throw off the despotic yoke of a European Power. The time must come when the opportunity will arise and we shall have the power to settle the Alabama claims in our own way. This bugbear will not deter the people and government of the United States from sustaining Cuba and from carrying out a great and cherished American policy on this hemisphere. But if we may judge from the tone of the leading press of England no effort will be made to frustrate the action of the American government or to prevent Cuba from becoming independent. As to Austria, it is sheer nonsense to speak about her interference. The rumored tripartite coalition is a canard and an impossibility.

Spain may bluster and be foolish enough to send out to Cuba iron-clads and fresh troops, but she is not so stupid as to think of war with the United States should this country recognize the independence of the Cubans. She has enough to do at home, and no nation would lend her a helping hand. Not that we have much confidence in the wisdom of Spain; for she foolishly fought to the bitter end and ruined herself to no purpose in her wars with the South American colonies, and it is possible she may do the same in the case of Cuba. Nor is this country under any obligation to Spain to forego its policy towards Cuba; for during our civil war she proved herself unfriendly in joining at first the coalition against Mexico and republican institutions and in her attempt to subjugate San Domingo, as well as in the war upon the South American republics. We have made a most liberal offer to Spain for the independence of Cuba and wish to maintain friendly relations with her, but we owe her nothing—no considerations beyond these—and should study only our own interests, the cause of humanity and the progress and perpetuation of republican institutions on all American territory. Peru has set us an example in recognizing the independence of Cuba, and this great republic should not be slow in following it. Indeed, it is a question if our government ought not to have been first and to have set an example to the other American republics. But the time has come and events have so culminated on this Cuban question that the administration will prove itself weak and lacking foresight if it does not at once take decisive action for the independence of Cuba. The public mind is ripe for it—the people expect it of the government. Sooner or later the independence of Cuba must come, and delay on the part of the United States will only complicate the question and lead to more bloodshed and devastation on the island. Prolonged negotiations and red tape diplomacy can accomplish nothing. Prompt and decisive action by General Grant's administration is the only solution of the difficulty.