

Cuba—The Excitement in Spain.

A telegram from Madrid which we published yesterday, says the Spanish press has been in a complete ferment of excitement and indignation since the presentation of General Sickles' notes to the government. Sickles himself comes in for a share of abuse as well as the United States government. It is said by the excited press that he was sent to Madrid because he was known to be a strong partisan of Cuban annexation. The press of Spain, England and France is much occupied with this subject also. While there is still some of the old jealousy of the United States apparent in the articles of the London and Paris newspapers, the Cuban question and difficulties are in general fairly discussed. This change of tone is significant and indicates the drift of public sentiment in Europe on the subject. There seems to be an impression that war between Spain and the United States is possible. One of the London journals says the war enthusiasm is gathering fast in Spain, and that what with Spanish pride and American sympathies the situation is very critical. Then, in connection with this excitement in Spain, we hear of the government sending vessels of war and additional troops to Cuba.

Governments do very foolish things sometimes, as well as individuals, and Spain has been famous for that in her disastrous wars with the South American colonies and republics. The Spaniards are very proud, and in the excess of their pride and chagrin at the prospect of losing Cuba may talk of war; but we have no idea that Spain will venture upon a conflict with the United States, for there would be neither honor nor profit in such a conflict. She would lose all her remaining American possessions and get nothing in return but defeat and an enormous increase of her debt. Indeed, she has not the means to wage such a war. "It is difficult to believe," as one of the European journals says, "that Spain, with a divided people, a bankrupt treasury, one colony in revolt, others to lose and nothing to win, can seriously contemplate war with one of the greatest Powers on earth."

Nor do we see what cause Spain has or can have to declare war against the United States. Our government has been active for a year during the struggle in Cuba in favoring Spain by suppressing expeditions to aid the Cubans. It has indirectly aided Spain by permitting arms, ammunition and supplies to go from this country for the Spaniards, while it has been vigilant in preventing any leaving for the Cubans. In fact, it has gone in direct opposition to public sentiment here in the desire to show its good feeling and honesty to a friendly nation. And now, when the war in Cuba has been prolonged for a year, when the atrocious conduct of it by Spain has shocked the civilized world, when the Cubans have been gaining ground all the time, and when the insurrection promises to be successful, our government offers itself as a mediator to settle the difficulty. Is that a cause of war? Is the offer to guarantee a hundred millions of dollars to Spain for the independence of Cuba, when by simply being passive or inactive Cuba would be freed without paying a dollar, an unfriendly act? Can this moderation and liberality of the United States be construed into a cause of war? The Regent Serrano certainly did not so consider it, for he thanked our government, through Mr. Sickles, for its offer of mediation. He went so far even as to submit a modified proposition to that of Mr. Sickles for the settlement of the difficulty, having for its end the independence of Cuba. Though the terms of his proposition were extravagant and could not be entertained, the fact that Spain consented to negotiate for the independence of Cuba at all was important, and showed that the action of the United States could not be regarded as offensive. The people of Spain will probably look at the matter in the same light their government does after the first ebullition of excitement subsides. Indeed, if they act as sensible men they will do so. Our special telegram from Washington, published to-day, goes to show that the opinions of the British and French newspapers on the subject of Cuba count as nothing in official circles, and that the Cabinet cannot understand why the Spaniards should become so intensely excited over the offer by General Sickles of a good round sum of money for the island, with the chance of being freed from the care of a people who, it appears, do not want them. Our diplomatic action in Madrid conveyed no threat, but, on the contrary, much excellent advice. It intimated that delay was particularly dangerous in this case—a fact which is confirmed by the enunciated resolve of the Cubans that the growing crops shall be destroyed and the island rendered desert by their own hands before they shall submit again to Spanish rule.

But the excitement spoken of in Spain seems to arise from the apprehension that the American government will go further and recognize the belligerent rights or independence of Cuba. And there is reason for this, even if our Minister at Madrid has intimated to the government there that such might be the case. Well, has not the United States a right to do this? Do not all nations act so in the case of civil wars when their interests, humanity and State policy lead them to such a course? Has not Spain herself done so? We might refer to the hasty recognition of our Southern States as belligerents by the European Powers, of which Spain was one, and to many other cases; but no argument is needed. Our government has been more forbearing and waited longer in the case of Cuba—yes, even against the sentiment and feeling of the American people—than is generally the case where national interests and policy are involved. We might refer to the unfriendly conduct of Spain in joining the coalition against Mexico, in sending a vast fleet to seize San Domingo, and in making war upon our sister

republics of America in defiance of the cherished American policy proclaimed by the Monroe doctrine at the time when our hands were tied by a gigantic civil war; but we are too magnanimous to raise this question for the purpose of retaliation. We wish to remain on friendly terms with Spain; but we cannot support her any longer in a cruel and hopeless war upon Cuba.

Whatever course the Spanish government may take, the time is near at hand when the United States will recognize the Cubans as belligerents or independent. That, we have no doubt, is the determined policy of the administration, as it is certainly the wish of the people. This subject will come up probably in Cabinet council soon after General Grant and his Secretaries return to Washington the present week, and we may expect to hear something more decisive. The President is not a man to back down. Sending of more Spanish war vessels and troops to Cuba, or the warlike tone of the Madrid press, or Prim's interviews with Napoleon, or Napoleon's despatches to his Minister in Washington, will not turn him aside from his purpose. Nor will the people of this great country give up their policy or the object they have in view at the threat of war. But there will be no war. The administration has only to be firm, and the Spanish government and people will come to their senses. The present excitement in Spain is simply a little storm, which has been raised probably for political effect, but which will pass away and leave the horizon clear for a settlement of the Cuban difficulty.