

## The Cuban Question—France, England and Spain.

What means this meeting of the waters? Prim, with the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, has been hanging about the Tuilleries for weeks. He has had the honor of interviews with the Emperor. Meanwhile Lord Clarendon, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has appeared upon the scene. A late cable despatch has it that both Prim and Clarendon have had an audience, at different periods, of the Emperor. It is at the same time announced that Baron Beust, the Austro-Hungarian Chancellor, is hourly expected in Paris. What does it all mean? It cannot be that they have met to consult about the Ecumenical Council, for that is already all arranged. It is not impossible that Prim's visit had something to do with the question of the Spanish throne. This, however, would not be his main object; it certainly could not be the object of Lord Clarendon, and with the disposal of the Spanish throne Baron Beust is not likely to have anything to say.

We have no choice, but conclude that the state of Cuba, taken in connection with the attitude of the government of the United States, has brought these diplomats together. What Spain should do in the circumstances is a question which Spain cannot very well decide for herself. In the difficulty the Spanish government sends Prim to consult Napoleon. The presumption is that Lord Clarendon has been quietly invited over and that the matter has been discussed among them, now in one point of view and then in another; intervention one day and non-interference the next, as we hear this morning. We do not much wonder that Cuba should now command the attention of both England and France. It is believed in Europe that the Cuban trouble would have been dead long ago but for the openly expressed sympathy of the American people with the insurgents. This belief has grown into an alarm since the presentation of the note of the government of the United States by Minister Sickles. Napoleon bears us a grudge because of our treatment of him in the Mexican question. Great Britain is indignant at our presumption and jealous of our growing power and our annexation tactics. It will not at all surprise us if, as the result of these deliberations, France and England should agree to do what they can to thwart our policy and thus seek to hold Cuba in bondage. It is not so long since a similar alliance was entered into for the same purpose. If the telegraphic report which we printed yesterday to the effect that Napoleon had sent instructions to his Minister at Washington commanding him to inform our government that it was "the desire of France that Cuba should be retained by Spain"—if this report have any foundation in fact, all doubt as to the attitude of the three Powers is at end. France is opposed to our policy; so is England; so probably is Austria. Spain has, in all likelihood, been plainly told that all moral help was vain unless she could make an end of the insurrection on the island. Hence the increased number of ships and the multiplied forces which the Spanish government is sending out. The policy recommended clearly is that if Spain can suppress the insurrection she will have the moral assistance of the Western Powers as against any annexation policy on

the part of the United States. This is the situation. Spain is to stamp out the rebellion if she can. Cubans are to be murdered wholesale. The island is to be desolated. If its fair fields should be converted into a shambles no matter; the island will still belong to Spain, and the re-establishment of authority will deprive the United States government of a pretext for annexation.

In such circumstances what will our government do? What should it do? Its course is clear. It has no choice if it would act the part of brave men and prove true to the cause of humanity. It is a fundamental principle of our constitution that no government should be forced upon an unwilling people. Our history from its commencement has been an expanded illustration of this principle. Our sympathies have ever been on the side of suffering and oppressed peoples, no matter in what part of the world they may have been. We have ever been foremost in succoring the distressed, although we have ever been duly respectful to the principles of international law. Cuba has claims upon us. She is one of our nearest neighbors. We respect her people and we love her land. Our duty, we have said, is plain. The Cubans must not be trampled down because they love liberty. Our first sin was that we loved liberty, but our first victory was that we justified our offence. Cuba is now in our position. We are bound to help her. The Cubans wish one of two things—Independence or annexation. Our government, by its own experience and by the claims of justice, must help the Cubans to the one or the other. With General Grant as President we must not allow any European Power to dictate to us a course of foreign policy. Surely we can, if need be, fight our way. The best English papers say we can. Let us, then, be true to ourselves. Cuba must not be crushed. If she cannot win her independence we are willing to say she ought to have it. If she cannot have her independence we ought to be willing to say we will do all things to secure annexation. One or the other, General Grant; think of it. We are a great people. Europe says so. Let us prove it.