ght to be determined by reason, t a fact to be settled by evidence, then produced evidence that the ces of Spain were reduced to a ndful of men, and that the Span- flag flew from one fort only; and insisted that, in fact, Spain had st control of the colonies, that ere was no actual contest, and at there was an operative inde- ndent government.

A few years later, during the Greek volution, Mr. Canning, in his fam- s dispatch to the British minister Constantinople, went a step fur- He said that belligerence, its independence, was a fact; and at when a party in a war had no prize courts, and could not admin- ister justice upon the ocean, but must destroy its prizes, then belli- erency, in the true sense, was not fact, and could not therefore, be recognized. This was a doctrine ar to every natural, and therefore n, who are so generally neutral; d it was this doctrine upon which Sumner insisted in his speech nst the Johnson treaty. It is, lled, a principle which can gov- national action. When civil war another country arises, or when, colony attempts to throw off the vernment of a parent country, e question is simply, not what our elings are, but what the situation In the United States, for in- stance, our feelings are always with the oppressed every where. But we do not, therefore, perpetually proceed to right wrongs every where by force, knowing that if we did so other nations could do the same, and that we should relapse into barbarism.

Meanwhile, of course, we reserve and assert the right of recognizing belligerency when we choose. That is indisputable. But the important question is, upon what principle shall we choose? Shall it be that we wish well to one side and not to the other, or that we think they have both fought long enough, or that there is doubt whether an in- surrection can be suppressed? Ob- viously there is no principle here; there is not fact. We may assert that under American principles every people ought to govern itself. Shall we, therefore, recognize the belligerence of Ireland? Or we may assert that every people has a right to independence. Shall we, therefore, try to thrust France out of Algeria? If we found recogni- tion of belligerence upon abstract rights, there can never be a definite ground of action.

Now a fact can be established by evidence, and when it is proposed to begin the recognition of the in- dependence of Cuba—for the con- cession of belligerence is nothing less—it is necessary to know whether the island is actually independent, or whether the hold of Spain is so relaxed that it is virtually so. The familiar fact is that the war has lasted for a long time; that Spain commands the ports; that the Cuban republic has no really opera- tive government; and that although the Volunteers have great control, they are virtually soldiers of Spain, while the only actual government upon the island is by the authority of Spain.

We have undoubtedly the right to recognize belligerence at our pleasure, but not without reason and upon principle; and the con- sideration that there has been a long war upon the island, and that there is great cruelty, may justify intervention in the name of humani- ty, which is a wholly exceptional proceeding; but it does not establish the fact that there is an organized, valid government, independent of Spain, and with the power of ad- ministering justice on land and sea.

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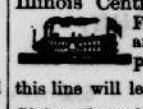

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