

# STEAMSHIP HORNET.

**Her Arrival at Nassau—Experience on the Passage—Endeavors to Get Coal—Her Troubles with the Authorities—Spanish Corvette and British Gunboat—Exchange of Visits with the Captain of the Latter—From Nassau to Port-au-Prince.**

STEAMSHIP HORNET. }  
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Dec. 18, 1870. }

After leaving New York on the 8th inst. nothing of interest occurred until we arrived at Nassau. Our experience on the passage is that the steamer is not as fast as we expected she would be, and she is a great coal burner, consuming twenty-seven tons a day, and more when driven hard. We were off the harbor of Nassau at six P. M. on the 13th, but being unable to get a pilot did not enter the port until the next morning. We had cleared for Nassau because our supply of coal on leaving New York was not sufficient for us to reach our destination, and we depended upon getting all we required at that port, but in this we were disappointed. The custom of the place is that all steamers desiring coal must first make written application to the Governor, stating the amount required; then it goes through any amount of red tape and circumlocution before the request is granted or refused. Our application went through the regular forms, but the reply was a refusal, on the ground of our suspicious character. The ship had been searched by the Revenue Department, but nothing was found of a contraband character—not a shadow that would tend to confirm their suspicions. Our large complement of men was thought to be queer, but their being on board was explained. Every one in the town had their own idea of us. One said we were going to fit as a privateer, another that we had landed guns and men on some one of the islands, and that as soon as we were coaled we should proceed to take them on board again, and then for Cuba. Indeed our entire cruise and destination was mapped out; but, apparently, no two were of the same way of thinking.

The captain of a Spanish corvette—the Bazan—succeeded in throwing suds into the Governor's eyes concerning us, and influenced him so strongly against us that the commander of her Majesty's gunboat *Philomel* was ordered to keep the strictest watch upon our movements. A boat pulled guard around us all night, and occasionally examined the snackle that secured our chain to the mooring buoy to see that we were not ready to slip and be off—that our captain was not endeavoring to play them a Yankee trick.

We were obliged to have coal, and as it could not be obtained at Nassau we were compelled to go where we could get it. The authorities were very particular in making inquiries as to where we desired to clear for, and the captain told them Vera Cruz, via Port au Prince. This satisfied them and the clearance was granted. The Spanish steamer in the meantime had left, and it was reported that she would lay for us outside; but we knew that she would have to steam faster than ever before to be able to give us trouble or retard our movements. By the time we were ready to be off, the *Philomel* also had steam up, and it was evident that she was going to accompany us, and everything promised a lively time. Just before we were ready to leave, the captain went on board the English steamer, where he was well received, and we learn that he was informed that we were to be seen clear of neutral waters, that we did nothing of a contraband nature on territory over which the British claim control. Captain Hudson also asked of him his protection in the absence of a United States ship of-war should the Spaniard interfere with him while in neutral waters; but, as the answer was not entirely satisfactory he returned on board and we went outside. Just as we were leaving the buoy the English captain returned the visit, and said to our commander that he came on a friendly call only, to give friendly advice, which was to deliver himself up to a British naval officer; that he would then be protected; that if we fell into Spanish hands we should receive no mercy. Captain Hudson thanked him, but said he would give up the ship to no one; that his papers were all right, and that he had a clearance from a British port.

By the time we were outside it was half-past six o'clock and quite dark. We were quite close to the Englishman, and thinking it a good time to show our antagonist a clean pair of heels, we gave the *Hornet* all the steam she could carry and soon left her Majesty's ship far astern, so that by nine P. M. his mast-head light was not visible, and since then we have seen neither of them.

They could not find the slightest flaw about us at Nassau or they would have been delighted to have made a seizure. Captain Walker would like us to have surrendered to him, but he mistook his game when he tried his persuasive powers upon our captain, who did not see his argument.

We are now going up the harbor, and expect to get all the coal we require. We have but one day's supply on board; but if we do not get what we want here it is understood that arrangements have been made for a supply of three or four hundred tons elsewhere.

The who's affair at Nassau was scandalous. To think that an American ship can be treated in a British port in such a shameful manner! During our war the authorities there did not hesitate to fit out every ship that was calculated to injure our cause. However, we have gained one point, and that is a clearance from a British port. We had a pilot from Nassau here, so that in the event of our being troubled we could at once run into neutral waters. All on board are well and in high spirits.

## Further News of the Hornet.

The *Hornet* took on board at Port au Prince about 300 tons of coal, which was purchased of M. Rivere, a merchant there, and left on the 22d inst. for Carthage to meet a cargo of ammunition. Captain Hudson expects to have lively times on his cruise, but is very reticent as to what he intends doing. He hints strongly at exciting events, which will only be developed as they progress. His crew consists of 106 men, many of whom are Cubans, but none of them were allowed on shore, and while at Port au Prince great excitement prevailed in the city as to the object and equipment of the *Hornet*, but they came to the conclusion that it was a Cuban expedition.