

The British Capture and Release of the Cuban Ship Lillian.

The Cubans, so far, have been very unfortunate in their efforts to make an appearance on the high seas. Their steamships, the Cuba and the Lillian, have both been seized. The difference between the seizure of the vessels has been that the Cuba was taken in charge by the American authorities and the Lillian by those of Great Britain. The case, however, of both vessels in the main was similar, but the treatment they have undergone was different. The Cuba put into Wilmington, N. C., to coal, and the Lillian approached Nassau for a like purpose. The two ships were brought to on the plea of being Cuban privateers, or blockade runners, and were held to await the action of the authorities on these charges. If there was sufficient evidence to make these arrests the proceedings were correct, but no time should have been lost in testing the reasons upon which such proceedings were founded. The steamer Cuba has now been in charge of the United States authorities at Wilmington for nearly three weeks, and yet we are as far from a solution of the difficulties of her case as we were the second day after her seizure. Why this delay? The people of the United States are anxious to be informed on this subject, and they also desire to have the case of the Cuba attended to with promptness. This red tape, do-nothing policy, which characterizes the treatment of the Cuban question, is humiliating. If the steamship Cuba was seized as a privateer, on that charge she could be rightfully held, but only so long as was necessary to test the allegation against her in the courts. A prompt decision was looked for by the people. This has not been done, and should the vessel be subsequently discharged it places the United States in a very awkward position.

How differently was the steamer Lillian treated by the English authorities at Nassau. While approaching the island of New Providence she was brought to and overhauled by the British gunboat Lapwing and taken into the harbor. Here she was held until her case was decided. The letter from our correspondent at Nassau, which was published in yesterday's HERALD, informs us that the vessel was seized on the 16th inst. The case was immediately laid before the Attorney General, who, after mature consideration, decided that the government could not legally hold the vessel, and she was accordingly released. We are further informed that on the 18th, as the New York steamer Eagle was leaving Nassau, the Lillian was getting under way and that the Cuban flag was flying at her peak.

From the prompt manner in which the authorities at Nassau have acted in the case of the Lillian it would seem that the English government does not regard the case of the Cuban patriots as altogether hopeless. It seems almost superfluous to state that British colonial agents understand thoroughly the policy of their government in matters of this nature, and possibly English statesmen, perceiving in the future the rise and growth of a new republic in the islands of the West Indies, do not desire to take any unnecessary step that might operate against British interests hereafter.

In contrasting the case of the Cuba with that of the Lillian the picture is not a gratifying one for the American people. President Grant, we feel satisfied, sympathizes with the Cuban struggle, and in this respect he is in sympathy with the wishes of the people. A bold, decisive American policy is what the country desires. Under such circumstances we should have none of those petty annoyances which the detention of the Cuba may yet submit the country to. The English authorities at Nassau have set an example worthy of emulation.