Mr. Stevens to Mr. Foster.

No. 87.]  

UNITED STATES LEGATION,  
Honolulu, February 27, 1893.  

SIR: In my dispatch 84, of February 1, I gave as one of the reasons for our action in assuming a qualified and temporary "protectorate" over these islands, the possibility of the arrival here of a British war vessel, and stated that the English minister thus aided might try to press unduly the Provisional Government. On the 13th instant the British cruiser Garnet, an iron ship of 2,120 tons, 240 men and officers, Capt. H. F. Hughes-Hallet in command, arrived here. Only three or four days had elapsed when the manifest unfriendliness of the English sailors as well as of some of the officers of the Garnet was displayed. The men of the Garnet being allowed to go on shore in the customary way, they soon showed marked sympathy for the fallen Queen's cause and indulged in insulting remarks towards the United States marines and sailors of the Boston on duty ashore by the request of the Provisional Government and with my approval.

There came very near being a riot and severe quarrel in the public streets. Only the forbearance and self-possession of the officers and men of the Boston prevented the English sailors getting a severe beating, with unhappy incidents. It at once became necessary for the Provisional Government to take precautionary steps as to the men from foreign naval vessels being on shore, providing that only those of one nationality should be on shore the same day. I cannot think that Capt. Hughes-Hallet, of the Garnet, gave countenance to this insulting and disorderly conduct of the men of his ship, though some of the under officers may have done so. Neither the captain of the Garnet nor his officers have made the customary call on the Provisional Government, and so far as possible they seem to wish to ignore it. It is generally supposed, and I think correctly, that the English minister here, Hon. J. H. Wodehouse, whose son is married to the sister of the Hawaiian Crown Princess, is largely responsible for this unfriendliness to the Provisional Government. By those best informed as to Hawaiian Government affairs in the past twenty years, it is said that Mr. Wodehouse in his persistent resistance to American predominance here has never been well supported by the British cabinet in London, and it is believed that he will not be now.

Were it not that our flag is over the Government House there is little doubt that this British unfriendliness would have done much more mischief in stirring up the "hoodlum" elements, of which the lottery and opium gang of the fallen Queen's supporters have more or less control. At a great American reception and ball here on the evening of the 25th instant, the largest and most imposing ever had in Honolulu, partly as a testimonial to Captain Wiltsie, of the Boston, about to leave for the United States, the English, the English diplomatic and consular officials, nor the officers of the Garnet attended, though they were invited.

I am, etc.,

JOHN L. STEVENS.