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San Francisco de Cuba
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Wm. S. Smith
1902. 66

Honorable Sir,

The incapability of Mr. Manuel R. Ecay, present Consular Agent of the U. States at this place, induced me on the 13th June last to petition for that Office, and as Mr. Ecay, notwithstanding the outbreak of an Insurrection in the country on the 8th inst. and the Governor of this District proclaiming in consequence Martial law and declaring the town of Manzanillo in a state of Siege, continues secluded at his country seat at a large distant from town, without the least sign of our nationality being represented anywhere, I have thought proper to lay before you a statement of the late occurrences, the more so, as there is no likelihood of any other report reaching Your Honor from this quarter.

The rumours of a contemplated rising of the Natives in this Island, headed by some 8 or 10 Estate Owners, who were known to be highly dissatisfied with the late taxation imposed upon landed properties and their production, was confirmed on the 9th inst. when a woman from the country came crying to town, that her husband had been pressed by a band of insurgents to join them on the foregoing night. The Governor of this District, who had only 50 men regular troops at his command here in the town, applied to the wealthier natives of old Spain and citizens for assistance to guard the town against an attack. Immediately that afternoon all stores,

Shops and houses were closed and men and bo-
natives of old Spain all flocked armed to the
square to defend the same as well as the adjacent
Barraza, Townhall and prisons, which latter
contained abt. 250 prisoners, mostly criminals
and was feared would be the chief view of the
Insurgents to liberate in order to swell their
numbers. Garasche were placed up kept a sharp
lookout all night at the entrance to town.
The excitement and alarm increased the
following morning, the 10th inst, when the
mail carrier bound for Pajarero returned
after two hours at abt. 8 o'clock saying that
a band of abt. 100 men had challenged him
at a distance to deliver the mail or his life
would be taken, whereupon he had turned
his horse and fled at full speed back to town.
On receipt of these news the Governor declared
the town in a state of Siege, proclaimed
martial law and took every possible pre-
cautionary measure for its defence.
The Merchant Fr. Encarnacion, which arrived
that day from St. Jago de Cuba on her way to
Bathurio, was without being allowed to
come to an anchor, dispatched at once back
to St. Jago to bring reinforcements. At the
same time the Governor dispatched an exp-
to Pajarero, where abt. 300 men Infantry &
Cavalry were stationed, to demand news
and had the news transmitted from the latter

place by wire to Havana and St. Jago de Cuba.
Some shopkeepers from the surrounding country,
mostly Catalans, who had availed themselves of
the first chance to get to town, and also some
women, whose husband had followed the In-
surgents, confirmed the previous reports, that
the Insurgents had already increased to over
1000 men and were scouting in bands of 100
to 200 men looking for arms and ammunition,
and trying to press everybody to follow their
ranks. The largest band of abt 500 men
under the command of an Estate owner, General
Carlos Manuel de Aspedes, had towards dusk
of the evening that the Insurgents entered Amulhambros.
By with 400 men Infantry & 12 men Cavalry sent
from Santiago to this town, the village of Yara,
at opposite side. The troops on hearing the
Insurgents cry of "Viva Cuba Libre", had on
their approach opened fire. The Insurgents,
on their horses taking to flight that the first dis-
charge of the troops, shall have ~~disappointed~~
and have returned to the charge with the same
cry, but shall have fled on the first discharge
of the soldiers, who had placed themselves inside
the church. Owing to the darkness both parties
troops as well as Insurgents seem to have been
unaware of each other strength or numbers,
the soldiers had however only one man wounded,
whilst it is unknown yet how many the Insurgents,
who were not to be seen on the following morning,
excepting one man hanging to a tree with two bullets.

in his body. The same day two policemen
captured near town a spy of the Insurgent
who had fired at them and he as well as others
who had either deserted or were arrested in and
outside the town divulged a good deal of the
Insurrection and its participants to the Governor
but this latter and other authorities observe a
rigorous silence as all matters of any concern
On the 10th inst. a shipkeeper of the town Ma-
tanzas, a native, was arrested and among
his goods landed the following morning from
on board the Merchant Ship "Abasco" coming from
Gataband, were found several packages and
powder & ammunition in two cases which had
been manifested to custom in another way.
The same morning the 12th inst. the 1st Co. of
returned in company of the Merchant Ship "Ho-
Brooks" which she had met near P. J. de Ca-
with 75 men Infantry on board. With these
Soldiers the Governor started for there to
the assistance of those who were there and return
the following evening after searching several
places for the Insurgents, without the success
mentioned. The same day found the Captain
besides some documents on board which are
arms and powder which the Insurgents had left
in and near Sagua in their flight of the 11th inst.
On the 14th inst. the Spanish Man of War "Ho-
Septima" arrived from Trinidad simultaneously
with the Merchant Ship "J. S. Leguado" from
Gataband, which latter had about 400 men on

infantry under command of a lieutenant Colonel. These troops were sent from Havana by rail to Batabanó, whence they arrived here in 36 hours. The Governor and their Colonel left the same evening of the 14th in the morning for Yara with all the troops excepting the abt 30 men Infantry and some volunteer cavalry, which with abt 200 armed citizens were left to guard the town. The following day they shall have reached the village Sibacoa, where they surprised a band of abt 200 Insurgents at dinner. The man of war 'Neptuno' has been making some excursions along the coast bringing in all the boats & coasters and has since yesterday remained to windward towards Cape Cruz, no doubt cooperating with the regular troops.

The merchant Mr. Tho. Brooks, which arrived yesterday from St. Jago de Cuba brought accounts of two British men of war having arrived there by request of the Spanish Government from Jamaica. At the same time it is stated in reliable quarters, that a band of Insurgents shall have carried off the Governor or Commandant and other Government officers at Sagunay with \$12000 of the P. Treasury, and have cut the telegraph wires leading from Bayamo to St. Jago de Cuba. The communication from here to St. Jago being thus by land interrupted, induced the Government of latter place to send said Hennessy with despatches and to place the same at the disposal of the Governor of this town.

Some Spaniards and Shopkeepers arrived this morning in a boat from the coast, where they had fled on the approach of a band of 2 to 300 Insurgents headed by Francisco Aguilera, the wealthiest man in this District owning several Sugar estates and immense tracts of lands. This band shall have entered the village of Caimito after a fruitless attempt to carry the village of Las Tunas, where they had been repulsed and after providing themselves with food and whatever arms they could find at Caimito shall have the intention to renew their attack on Las Tunas.

It is stated to-day, that the Governor and Colonel at the head of the troops, which left Havana on the evening of the 14th inst, shall be in close pursuit of the Insurgents in command of Gen. Cespedes, from whose ranks many shall have deserted on approach of the regular troops and as several detachments of troops have been sent from Havana and are said to be on their way inland to cooperate with the soldiers from this District, there seems to be no chance of the Insurgents carrying their point, especially as long as the insurrection is confined to this District of Manzanilla.

There are but few American Citizens in this District and only one Amer^{ic}an vessel, the Brig. Isola of New York. F. W. Leach M^r, loading Tobacco for New York. Besides this there are only the Brit. Brig. Morning Star and the Gen.

barge T Diefeld in port, the former loading
also for New York - No men of war neither
foreign nor American have made their appearance
as yet. - The Custom-house has been shut
up since the 13th inst and the Officials have
all retired with their Books and valuables to the
Townhall on the Square, where the Collector how-
ever despatches the Shippers of produce -

Notwithstanding the great excitement and
alarm caused by the insurrection, the town
has remained quiet and perfect order prevails.
The slaves and coloured population have also
remained perfectly quiet, altho' great fear is
entertained on their account. -

Should the Insurgents maintain themselves
for some time, the consequences of abandon-
ment of agriculture, especially amongst the
poorer classes, will be severely felt and great
fears are entertained, that starvation will
follow the insurrection, as the season has
commenced for sowing Tobacco and attending
to the country provisions. -

The Insurgents proclamation shall be headed:
Viva Cuba libre! Republica y el G. Prim! -
and I have only to add: Dieu protège la
pauvre Ile! Remain most respectfully
Yours Honor
the 17th October 1868 } humble obt. servant
His Honor } C. W. F. Fithorne
Secret. W. Seward }
Washington }
Washington }
Washington }