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Shafter and Sampson Go Ashore to Confer With General Garcia

Commanders of the Land and Naval Forces of the United States at Santiago Visit Aserrado, Only a Few Miles from Thousands of Spanish Soldiers and Cervera's Fleet, Without Any Military Escort, Except the Officers of Their Staffs

Colonel Astor an Interested Spectator at the Conference in a Palm Leaf Hut

General Garcia's Camp
Aserradero, Cuba, Monday
via Port Antonio, Jamaica, Tuesday

The first landing of the regular army has just taken place at this little point of land, twelve miles west of Santiago.

It was a landing for conference only, and the most interesting feature of it is that, without military escort of any sort, General Shafter, the commander of the army of invasion, and his staff; Admiral Sampson and Lieutenant Stanton, his chief of staff, have landed in a small boat on the shore of the enemy's country within twelve miles of twelve thousand Spanish soldiers and the Castle of Morro, without a musket or a revolver to protect them. The Marblehead lay off shore.

A ragged escort of Cuban soldiers met them on landing, but of United States soldiers, except in the sense that the officers of the highest rank in the army are soldiers, there was not one.

A Historical Moment

It is a historical moment in the history of Cuba, if not of America, for General Garcia, General Shafter and Admiral Sampson have met for the first time. They are grouped together, under a sun so hot that it burns the eyes, on a high cliff overlooking a magnificent valley of royal palms, which meets motionless a blue sea broken only by lines of white breakers on the shore, and which further out is broken again by the slow moving hulls of thirty transports and thirty ships of war.

The three commanders are seated on boxes under the palm leaf roof of an open hut. One of them has a blue print map on his knees, and before they roll it up again the attack on Santiago will be decided upon and her fate sealed.

Outside this hut are five negro sentries, naked to the waists, and on the open space about the hut are hundreds of the Cuban army officers, well armed and well uniformed, privates of

every shade of skin, with every make of weapon and small laughing boys, armed with machetes or not armed at all.

The palm leaf hut where the conference is taking place is open to the hot air at both ends, and on each side and standing about it or kneeling on the ground in order to obtain a better view are the strangest gathering of persons that this war has thrown together.

Colonel Astor Present

Colonel John Jacob Astor is crowded by a black giant, with only a guard belt to cover his naked shoulders. There are also General Ludlow, of the engineers; General Costello and Lieutenant Miley and Admiral Sampson.

Colonel Goetzen, the German attaché, in spotless white, and a Cuban officer, in a linen blouse and with bare feet, are talking in signs, and with them is Captain Lee, the British attaché, booted and spurred, with field glasses, helmet and immaculate khaki.

Captain Steward Brice, in the uniform of the volunteer army—a blue jacket with breeches rolled above the knee—and a group of ensigns from the war ship, act as a background to the principal actors, and still further back of them are the Cuban soldiers, squatting on the ground, curious and interested, and showing their teeth in broad smiles of welcome and touching their straw hats when any one of the American officers looks their way.

Any land would seem fair after a week on the troop ships, but there are few lands more fair than this one, and few places on it more beautiful than this camp of Garcia's, lying between the great mountains and the great sea, shaded by the royal palms and colored by the brilliant and scarlet flowers

The conference is ended, and General Shafter and the Admiral are bidding goodbye to General Garcia, who looks, with his beard and mustache of the third empire, like a marshal of France.

What the conference has decided we shall know tomorrow For the present the news is that the army of invasion has arrived. Its first landing has taken place.

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