

New York Journal
August 28, 1898

Stephen Crane Sees Free Cuba

HAVANA, Aug. 26, VIA KEY WEST, Aug. 27.—The feeling here grows stronger for annexation. Every day the Spaniards fear an onslaught from the Cuban troops, hungry for many things of which they have been long deprived. The Spaniards now respect the Americans, and probably will give hearty welcome to the American troops.

Reports from Santiago say the American soldiers have prevented any possible exuberance on the part of the insurgents, keeping them at the outskirts, and have made a great impression among the dominant mercantile classes. These regard the entrance of the Americans with tranquility, and in many cases pleasure.

Four Havana thieves talking yesterday said: "We must steal as much as possible before the Americans come, for then we will get into great difficulty if we steal." They had been used to paying \$5 immunity for each case caught. Their sentiments give a line on the prevailing idea regarding Americans.

There will be no trouble from the volunteers provided the United States protect everybody. Even in the unconquered city of Havana the American is conqueror, if we may be allowed to speak in that way.

Steamships loading or unloading here are delayed owing to the physical weakness of the stevedores, but the higher classes in every case have had plenty of food, the difference being in quality, never quantity.

Advices from Matanzas state that the condition of the poor people is simply horrible. Men, women and children lie in the street. The consular authorities feel the Red Cross relief should come quickly. There is no such condition in Havana, where plenty of merchant ships are now coming.

The cane fields and sweet potato patches between here and Matanzas are well under way. The Spanish troops along the route look very hungry. No white flags are flying.

The better people of Matanzas also wish annexation. Along the route are temporary thatched villages for the reconcentrados. The armored cars still run on all trains, each car containing about thirty soldiers. Their rifles are in miserable condition, and the soldiers look as bad as reconcentrados. The garrison of Matanzas, amounting to 6,000, and a large force of insurgents under Betancourt are encamped within twelve miles.