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SPANISH TREATMENT OF MASONS IN CUBA.

We have received inquiries from Masons in the United States regarding the treatment of Cuban members of the fraternity residing within Spanish jurisdiction. The facts have been difficult to obtain; but, as nearly as we can get at them from special sources of information, they are as follows: Some months ago a Cuban lodge was meeting in a secret place near St. Jago de Cuba, when some of General Valmaseda's troops made a descent upon them and captured them, eighteen in number. The object of this raiding, the Masons insisted, was the transaction of ordinary business. But Valmaseda had professed to have a belief that they were assembled to protect the cause of Cuban independence. They were, therefore, turned over to one of his lieutenants, Gonzalez Boet, and marched off into the country, under charge of a detachment of soldiers. On reaching a secluded spot, Boet ordered the captives to be shot down, and they were thus annihilated without trial or preliminary inquiry of any kind. It is believed that Valmaseda had given Boet a verbal order to do this deed of butchery. The captured Masons were all Cubans, gentlemen of high respectability, and their friends assert, were innocent of any complicity in the Cuban revolution; though there is no question that their private sympathies, as those of nearly all Cuban-born, living within the Spanish lines, were with their struggling fellow countrymen.

The Spanish Government in Cuba foresaw that this piece of inhuman slaughter might give rise to demands for explanation from the American or English government, and Gonzalez Boet was arrested and detained in some prison, unknown to our informants, to be produced in case an inquiry was instituted at the instance of a foreign power. But neither the American nor the English government meddled in the affair—it is doubtful whether either of them were accurately advised of the circumstances—and the murderer of the eighteen Masons remains unpunished and unrebuked by the Spanish authorities of Cuba to this day. Whether he is still nominally incarcerated or is free, we are unable to say. Soon after hearing of this horrible occurrence, a lodge of Cuban Masons met in Havana, to take the usual steps for commem-

orating by a "Lodge of Sorrow" the death of their unfortunate brothers, when they were pounced upon by order of the Captain-General, and thrown into prison. Among the number seized were several officers of the United States monitor *Sangu*, and these were set free immediately after arrest—the Captain-General or his subordinates fearing that this government might exact reparation for any ill-treatment of the officers.

Upon the arrival of the Cuban Masons between thirty and forty of them—at the prison, they were examined by the judge who holds court on the premises, and he, finding that they had committed no offense cognizable by him, gave them their liberty. The Spanish local government was much incensed at thus losing its victims, and, by a peremptory order, all the Masons were re-arrested and put into a military prison, where they now remain. The just judge, as a mark of the Captain-General's displeasure for his humanity, was exiled to Spain, and in the *Epoca*, at Madrid, published a justification of his course in the matter. What will be the fate of the Cuban Masons, upon whom the hand of tyranny has fallen so harshly, cannot be surmised. It is given out that they will be tried some time or other by court martial. They may be shot or sent to Fernando Po, or kept in prison for a term of years, or during the pleasure of the Captain-General. It is thought the extremest penalty will not be inflicted upon them, as the Captain-General hesitates to enrage all the other Masons in Cuba, and to incur the further enmity of that powerful organization throughout the world.

The Masons under arrest are men of high character, and some of them of elevated social position, and are believed to have refrained studiously from any overt acts of aid and comfort to the revolutionists, although their feelings must naturally be with that struggling people in the interior. Other Masonic lodges in Havana, composed of Cubans, have not been disturbed, we are told; but they care their exemption from De Rodas' persecution only by carefully avoiding the appearance of sympathy with the Cuban cause. This statement of facts, as full and accurate as we have been able to gather, will serve as a general answer to the anxious letters of inquiry which we have received upon this subject.—*N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*