

SPANISH RULE IN CUBA.

Details of One of the Latest Acts of Tyranny—An Ex-Herald Correspondent Kidnapped, Thrust Into the Common Jail and Expelled the Country—Attempt to Intimidate the Herald Correspondents—Gross Outrage on a British Subject.

NEW ORLEANS, Oct. 30, 1899.

This morning the attention of the British Consulate in New Orleans was called to one of the latest acts of tyranny perpetrated by the Spanish rulers of Cuba. It would appear that the graphic and interesting reports of the operations of the Cuban patriots which have been published in the **HERALD** have caused alarm and confusion in the Spanish camp, and very erroneously (as will appear in the sequel). The authorship of these letters has been fixed upon a former correspondent of the **HERALD** in Havana, Mr. H. J. Koppers. The secret vigilance committee recently established by the Spanish City Governor—a mere creature of the volunteer organization—devoted their utmost energies to obtain proofs of the complicity of Mr. Koppers in the **HERALD**'s too faithful narratives. They failed utterly, but notwithstanding the entire absence of proof they kidnapped the suspected newspaper writer on the eve of a public holiday, thrust him into the common jail, and kept him in solitary confinement for two days, without permitting him to communicate with either the American or English Consul, and without even according him the privilege of a change of linen. By a dexterous subterfuge the prisoner finally succeeded in obtaining pencil and paper. With the phosphorus of a match he wrote on the bottom of a match box, "Papel y lapiz"—paper and a pencil—and thrusting his hand through the iron grating of his dungeon contrived to sling the message, wrapped in a handkerchief, into the cell of an adjoining prisoner, who was not incommunicado. Paper and pencil were supplied him in the same way by his brother unfortunate, and he thus managed to convey to his friends the knowledge of his position. Mr. Koppers, though for some years a correspondent of the **HERALD**, happened to be still a British subject. The British Consul General in Havana acted with commendable promptitude and decision in the matter. He rendered himself personally responsible for the captured suspect, and obtained his release. All efforts to procure a definite bill of accusation against the unfortunate ex-correspondent failed. Nothing further than that his "relaxed morals" required police espionage, and that he had "distinguished himself at sundry times by his writings against the Spanish government," could be elicited from the authorities. These two charges are evidently one and the same thing, the "relaxed morals" being a want of appreciation of the beauties of Spanish rule. In proof that no other charge could be brought against him Mr. Koppers to-day produced at the British Consulate in New Orleans a certificate signed by every foreign merchant of standing in Havana that they had personally known him for upwards of twenty years and that his moral character was irreproachable. To this certificate the English Consul at Havana appended the following endorsement:—

I hereby certify that the signatures to the document on the other side hereof are true and genuine and are those of highly respectable merchants residing and carrying on business in this city. I further certify that I have known Mr. Koppers for the last twenty years, and can testify to what is set forth in the certificate on the other side hereof.

JOHN V. CRAWFORD,

Acting Consul General in Cuba.

BRITISH CONSULATE GENERAL, Havana.

The Spanish authorities insisted upon the expulsion of Mr. Koppers from the island, hoping thereby to ~~show fruitlessly~~ the news columns of the **HERALD** ~~the supply of news from the patriot camp and to intimidate other correspondents.~~ Koppers before leaving filed the following protest:—

At the British Consulate General at Havana, before me, John Vincent Crawford, Esq., her Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul General in Cuba, personally appeared Henry James Koppers, a natural born subject of her Majesty, born at London, England, and declares that he has resided in Cuba since 1833, and was ~~solely~~ pursued his calling as clerk and ~~bookkeeper in different mercantile offices in this city during that period, having for three or four years previous to October, 1898, acted as correspondent at this place for the New York Herald; that on Wednesday, the 8th inst., being a strict holiday, and between the hours of three and four in the afternoon, he was arrested in the street by an officer of the police, who, without exhibiting any warrant or stating any reason, ordered declarant to step into a carriage, and forthwith conveyed him to the common jail, where, after being registered and searched, and everything but his money taken from him, declarant was placed in solitary confinement and denied any means of communicating with his consulate or with his friends, or of obtaining a change of linen; that he was thus detained in anxious suspense, suffering both bodily and mentally, being totally unaware of the reason of his being so treated, until five P. M. of Friday, the 10th instant, when he was released by an order obtained through this Consulate; that on presenting himself to the Acting Consul General declarant was notified that he must leave the island of Cuba by an early opportunity, according to an order from the Captain General, on the plea that "his relaxed morals had required on several occasions the interference of the police, and that as regards politics he had distinguished himself at sundry times by his writings against the Spanish government, and especially at present by repeating and propagating absurd news, and as a correspondent of falsehoods of several New York papers."~~

Declarant solemnly declares that he has never, during the whole period of his residence here, given any cause whatever for the slightest interference of the police, and he challenges any record of the same, his habits being naturally steady. He further solemnly declares that he has never meddled, either directly or indirectly, with the politics of this island, nor has he ever done anything with a view to offend or injure the Spanish government; that he has never repeated or propagated any absurd or malicious news, and that during the period he acted as a correspondent of the New York Herald he fulfilled his duty as a news reporter to that paper without partiality and with a sincere desire of reporting the truth on all occasions; that he has never corresponded with any other New York paper, and that he notified the Havana Office of the **HERALD**, as also other local papers, that he ceased to be the New York Herald's correspondent here last October, when the insurrection broke out; that since that date he has not corresponded with any newspaper, and that his connection with the new agent of the New York Herald has been chiefly confined to making faithful translations in English of all the news published at Havana in the Spanish press, which, as is notorious, is under strict censorship.

Declarant therefore desires to protest, and by these presents does most solemnly protest, against the Spanish government and its representatives here for the arrest and unjust imprisonment which he has suffered, and against the mandate for his expulsion from this island, all of which are not only detrimental to his reputation, but will entail upon him very serious losses, which he estimates at £3,000 sterling.

H. JAS. KOPPERS.

Declared and signed by the said Henry James Koppers in the presence of me, JOHN V. CRAWFORD, Acting Consul General in Cuba.

The British Consul at Havana has forwarded this protest to Earl Clarendon, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, with a strong endorsement of its contents, and something further is likely to be heard of it.