

THE HESPERIAN.

VOL. XXVIII.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, FEBRUARY 23, 1899.

No. 21.

In Error Still

It grew beside my careless way,
A wild flower of dew-sparkling glades,
When all the tender tints of day
Luxuriant warmed its fragil blades.

Day after day I saw its blooms,
Like tender eyes look up to me,
And stooped to find the rich perfumes
That call the honey-hoarding bee.

Yes, they were there. Like spirits pure
And delicate, full of heaven's light;
They called with words unspoke but sure
To taste of love, learn passion's might.

And when, like bees by sweetness mooved,
Lured to the blossoms it adorns,
I clasped the petals that I loved,
Ah, then, I found their cruel thorns.

The wild flower stands for other things
An error, maybe, wild and vain,
Not sin, though like sin it wrings
The heart, all throbbing full of pain.

Ah yes, a wild flower of my heart,
And long ago I let it fall;
Hurt till I felt the life blood start,
Before I would resign it all.

And true, for other things it stands,
For tears and sorrow's stronger power,
That bade me seek earth's farthest lands.
Would I have gone for just a flower?

And would I rather face a foe
Beneath a tropic forest's gloom;
Than tread the old haunts to and fro,
And watch a wild rose blush and bloom?

And would I hesitate to turn,
And seek the wide, home-leading sea,
And old haunts, where, twixt fronds of fern,
A meadow flower looked up to me?

Oh, should I walk mid clinging dew,
And find the old flower bloomed and borne
Upon the spot where first I knew
Its mellow fragrance and its thorn,

And if I paused and gazed a while,
Recalled each petal, far more bright
And sweet than when its early smile
Waked through my heart that first delight,

If I were tempted, then, to take
What means my life's full joy or pain,
Would heaven's keen judgment quick awake,
And chide me that I erred again!
—IRA KELLOGG.

IN CAMP NEAR GUANABACOA, CUBA, Feb. 12, 1899.

MY DEAR SWAIN:—For some time I have been planning to pen you a few words but have scarcely had time to write to even my mother.

Since arriving in Cuba, our battalion of engineers have been so heavily worked that we have scarcely had enough men free to do our own local guard duty.

This is indeed a new world to most of us. From the morning we left Miami, Florida until now we have seen so many hundreds of strange sights that we are almost drugged by them into a passive nonchalance which would not let a man open his eyes in surprise if he should meet Washington Irving's "Devil and Tom Walker" coming down the pike hand in hand.

For three weeks now I have been running a transit in a meander survey of Havana. We are to locate and make detailed drawings of all the fortifications that surrounded the city.

It is impossible to realize how perfectly Havana was and is fortified until you walk over the ground and note the commanding positions occupied and the extreme care shown to obtain cross-fires by big guns and infantry. The men who designed these defences were certainly well-versed in the science for there is scarcely a foot not protected by a deadly fire from the trenches.

As regards these people, human nature is the same most everywhere. Of course it goes without saying that the average Cuban is low in the social scale compared with Americans. In the first place, the higher classes are pure Spaniards who have cast off the Spanish yoke by virtue of Uncle Sam's strong right arm, yet they never cast off the "Spirit of Munana" and they will be long in learning that a man should be just as particular to wear clean underclothes as he is to wear clean trousers.

In the second place, the lower classes are a degradation of the Spanish race. A mixture of negro and Spanish blood produces a breed which "will never set the river on fire."

We are camped on a high hill just east of Havana Harbor. Regla lies between us and the harbor, and Guanabacoa is east of us, just at the foot of our hill. Inland to the south is a range of low mountains against the sky line, and between us