

"What was your motive in deserting your company and becoming traitor to your nation in her time of need?"

The words stung to the quick, but with flashing eye the prisoner replied:

"Because Spain has shown that she cannot conquer Cuba; because it is merely her obstinate pride that makes her sacrifice her own soldiers and commit hellish outrages against these patriots to no purpose; and, because Cuba ought to be and shall be free!"

Instantly a shout arose. A dozen officers sprang toward him with drawn swords, but the general stepped in front of the prisoner and waved them back. At a word, the guard hurried Tapón from the court, but as he was passing through the door the words, evidently spoken loudly for his benefit, "To be shot at sunrise," reached his ears.

On his way to the dungeon, to which as condemned prisoner he was led, a nurse came running down the corridor towards them. She was scarcely more than twenty, but her fair, tear-stained face showed signs of an anxiety that was nearly breaking her heart. To the question written so plainly in her eyes, though she could not speak for emotion, the prisoner responded in as steady a tone as he could command: "Good bye, Cecilia, forever."

"Oh, Rodrigo!" she cried, throwing her arms about his neck, and sobbing convulsively. Then the soldiers led Tapón del Vivar on to his dungeon.

Theirs was a sad story. Drafted for the Cuban army a month before the day set for their wedding, Tapón del Vivar had left sunny Spain and his hopes to go to a land of yellow fever and of disgrace for Spanish arms. Brave and true, Cecilia declared that life in Spain without her lover would be intolerable, and went on the same vessel to join the corps of nurses in Havana. Both were in sympathy with the patriots, and the fact that she had not scorned the suggestion that perhaps desertion from forced service and alliance to a noble cause would not be treachery caused him, when the opportunity offered, to steal away from the Spanish army and join the insurgents. He had been recaptured and brought to Morro Castle. Cecilia, hearing of the event, hurried to the castle, where her beautiful face and charming manner, for both belonged to the better class of Spain, won for her the privilege of seeing her lover once more. The meeting was short, but happy, in spite of the unfavorable circumstances. Rodrigo with-