

**THE FALL OF PANAMÁ:  
AND OTHER ISTHMIAN  
RHYMES AND SKETCHES**

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The Fall of Panamá: And Other Isthmian Rhymes and Sketches by J. S. Gilbert

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**J. S. GILBERT**

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BY J. S. GILBERT

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INTRODUCTION BY  
TRACY ROBINSON

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NEW YORK

1894

W. A. S.

YO PREGUNTO.

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*Is he the greatest poet who doth sing  
With voice attuned unto a perfect lyre,  
In accents flawless and with Sapphic fire,  
And thus unto the erudite doth bring  
Lost thoughts of ancient classics 'round which cling  
The glammers of scholastic memories—  
Till, once again, the captive fancy flies  
To roam the sacred groves on dreamful wing :  
Or, is the humbler minstrel greater still,  
Whose untrained voice and harp with discords oft  
May vex the sense ; but whose true notes, so soft,  
And long and sweet, the very soul do thrill  
With feeling that the most untutored mind  
May know as purest love for all mankind ?*

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**Dedicated**

*TO*

*COLONEL A. L. RIVES.*



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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LIFE on the Isthmus of Panama has some interesting and peculiar features. The geographical isolation being practically complete, except by sea, it follows that a narrow strip of country along the Panama Railroad is all that Modern Civilization can boast of having captured. Nor is there evidence that any astonishing advances have yet been made within even this limited zone. The jungle still holds sway and defies the schoolmaster. Intellectual life, like most other luxuries, has been an imported article. Among those who have from time to time held official positions in the different Companies, or who have been engaged in other business pursuits, there has now and then been one who has caught the spirit of the place and has had the surprising energy to write interestingly of his surroundings.

That this has been the case with my friend, the writer of the following pages, is my own firm conviction, and it gives me pleasure to believe that the public will agree with me.

INTRODUCTORY.

These poems and sketches have been evolved from an inner consciousness the visible and outward environment of which has been an active business life. They have been penned while others slept, or were engaged in some other engrossing tropical employment quite as intellectual. The somewhat limited local audience to which they were addressed has been greatly pleased, and it would give the numerous friends of their Author much gratification to know that a wider public had endorsed the verdict.

TRACY ROBINSON.

COLON, November 15, 1893.