

THE SONG OF THE DRUM.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.
Do you hear my summons hammer thro' the crackle and the clamor,
Do you feel my throb and thrill?
When I meet the smell of powder, oh, my merry note grows louder,
And my song shall not be still.
Follow, each beside his fellow, 'neath the vapors gray and yellow,
Wildly cheering, sternly dumb,
And rattle, rattle, rattle, when the smoke-wreaths toss and tumble,
You shall hear the rolling drum. Follow the drum!

Men forget their fears and follies as they face the blinding volleys,
And the young recruits they come,
With their simple sunburnt faces, from the quiet country places,
To the call of me, the drum,
Come, ploughboy, lad and carter, and your life-blood freely barter
For the bullet sure for some,
And rattle, rattle, rattle, through the din and roar of battle,
You shall hear the rolling drum. Follow the drum!

When the boys that follow fast there, drop aside and fall at last there,
From the surging lines of red,
Then no more of pomp and rattle; my notes awhile I muffle;
And I mourn and mourn the dead,
But the losing battle needs me, and the whistling bullets speed me;
Through the reeling ranks I come,
And clatter, clatter, clatter, where the broken regiments scatter,
You shall hear the rolling drum. Follow the drum!

RICARDO'S BLUE MULE.

When Ricardo bought the mule of the stranger who passed on, there was nothing to distinguish him from the innumerable mules of oblivion except a streak of thin blue hair forming a tropical zone around his body just behind his shoulders. Whether this was Nature's frolic or the freak of some former owner's humor, Ricardo did not inquire. That was immaterial, inasmuch as the mule had four legs free from eccentricities, and, as the prudent Ricardo had taken pains to demonstrate, could pull well at the arrastrar pole.

Ricardo was delighted with his acquisition. He could see in it the dawn of a new prosperity, a rainbow of delightful promise. "Mi favorito!" he exclaimed, patting the beast fondly, as he tethered and fed him on that first night of his proud proprietorship; "ah, mi favorito!" The mule placidly chewed the straw which Ricardo offered, but did not respond to his endearment with so much as a wink.

It was a brilliant moonlit night, a fitting time and occasion for an exchange of sentiment, but there was a blank expression on the mule's face that disturbed the impressionable Ricardo. He disappeared, returned with a tallow candle, and held it before his companion's eyes as if more intently to study his physiognomy. Not a shadow of change passed over the beast's countenance; not a blink nor a sign of curiosity was aroused by the sputtering dip. When his new and admiring owner lifted his head, the blue mule gazed calmly into the firmament as though the candle were a part of it, and then plunged his nose again into the straw brought from the Valley of Sonoyta, fifty miles away, where things grow.

"Ay, el estrangero!" said Ricardo, reflectively, "swindler!" Ricardo could express his thoughts in two languages, but that was all he said. It was evident that his mind had reverted unpleasantly to him who had passed on.

Next morning Ricardo tied the mule to the arrastrar pole, fastened the badge over his eyes, and set him at work as though nothing had happened. He spoke genially to his beast, hit him inoffensively with the rawhide as a mere matter of form, and the blue mule plodded cheerily upon his endless journey. Imagine a circular pavement of large flat stones, with a double rim made of two rows of smaller stones set on edge; in the centre an upright revolving shaft from which a pole radiates horizontally to the outside of the circle; bound to the sole midway a heavy block of granite, and hitched to the pole's outer end the blue mule. A burro comes down from the mountains with two hundred and fifty pounds of ore on his heroic little back, and gets his first drink of water for three days. Ricardo dumps the ore into the puddle of water and quicksilver in the arrastrar, and it is ground into a paste as the mule drags that heavy block of granite over it in the little circle. Walking around and around, the beast would become dizzy were he not blindfolded—one readily sees that and congratulates the hoodwinked mules on the happy and honorable way in which they have been befooled into thinking they are getting ahead.

A swarthy, corpulent man with straight black hair and a feeble fuzz of beard, contrasting humorously with his great bulk, passed by and grunted at Ricardo. The mule-driver saluted gravely. He saw nothing incongruous in the alcalde's beard, nor could he regard with aught but seriousness the great man of the town and district, sole representative of law and authority, owner of the mills, and virtual proprietor of the town and its inhabitants. Woe be to the peon who should incur the ill-will of the alcalde or of the alcalde's hairless dog trotting by his side!

Another traveller came down the sandy path. Although Ricardo had been attending faithfully to his work, a thrill had come to his consciousness at the moment she came through the opening that never opened or shut, the one door of the alcalde's house. He looked up as if a gracious cloud had passed before the sun in that cloudless, pitiless sky; saw the girl, and smiled.

"Mulcho calor," he said as she drew near. Topics of conversation are much the same in all lands and among all classes and conditions. "Yes," she said, pleasantly, "it is very hot."

"Where are you going, señorita?"
"To the father's store for some chiles."
"You are going to have something nice for supper?"
"Yes, some tamales."

"Ah, I wish"—But he did not complete the sentence. It was cut off by a snort from the blue mule, now pulling and kicking as if in resentful state of mind. "Steady!" he shouted to the mule, snapped his azote, then turned to the girl again.

She had started off. "Why don't you come, then?" she asked provokingly, turning half around.
"Wait a moment, Teresa!" pleaded the mule-driver. "Will you dance with me to-night?"
"I'll see!" she laughed, as if to prove that the sex has some tantalizing instincts in all latitudes.

Ricardo heard a mutter of derision from the arrastrar next below his, as the girl went on down the path. He turned simply. Another voice accosted her inquiringly. She answered gayly as was her wont, but did not linger. "Hombre brutal!" mumbled Ricardo. "It was that Ramon who stoned the mule." But he was too busy with thoughts of the dance he had bespoken to give Ramon more attention.

Ricardo thrived, and the blue mule was his most helpful ally. Often did he call down blessings on the head of the stranger whom he had denounced as a cheat; and sumptuously did the mule fare, as sumptuousness goes with mules and in Quitovic. Of all the mules that labored in that quaint desert town, Azul was the most trustworthy, the most intelligent. Why should he have a driver, when he would so honestly drag the pole for the whole of his six hours' shift, night or day, without a word from his master? That rare visitor to the arrastrar town, the Spirit of Enterprise, touched Ricardo. He contracted with the alcalde to take charge of a second mill near by, and with the aid of the loyal Azul he operated two arrastras at once and earned double pay. He was the rising young man of the village.

"Azul, mi favorito!" he exclaimed, night after night, as he embraced the blue mule, gave him his straw with the little measure of corn that cost so dear, and encircled him with his hair lariat to preserve him from rattlers—"And they don't know—not one of them knows!"

I am sure that Ricardo had other and suitable expressions of attachment and admiration for Señora Teresa, in whose sight he had found increasing favor as the months went by and whose all important father did not frown upon his suit. Ricardo felt at peace with his little world; but is it not sad that prosperity and peace ever generate the poison that rankled in the heart of Ramon?

One day the jealous one betook himself to the court of the alcalde, in the store of baked mud, among the beans and peppers and miners' kits. He had come with a complaint, he said, his own and others. There was something new and something wrong with Quitovic.

"To-morrow I will listen to you," said the alcalde, for to-morrow was always the alcalde's busy day.

There were many to-morrows, but Ramon persisted till the great man paused to hear him.

"It is a cheat," said Ramon. "One man is doing the work of two."

"It may be so," replied the alcalde, deliberately.

"There will be mischief."

"We shall see."

"Creáme, your worship! It will waste the ore and lose the gold."

The alcalde's eyes gleamed. "Do you know that?" he asked.

"I am sure, your worship."

"I will see, to-morrow," and the great man waved off the little one.

Ricardo and Azul worked faithfully, as to-morrow's approached and receded, unconscious of the disaster that had taken shape in Ramon's mind. The latter held his peace and flung no more taunts at the mule, sanguine that he had laid the train for the catastrophe, and had only to apply the match.

"How happy I am!" murmured the happy Ricardo to Teresa, as they sat on a rock near the arrastras, next day. "I have spoken to the padre."

"I have told nobody," she answered, softly.
"No, let it be a secret till all is in readiness. Then we will have a fiesta!"

"Shall we go to San Antonio?"

"Yes, and you shall have flowers."

"Flowers?"

"Many flowers and garlands. They shall come from Sonoyta."

Ricardo arose and bestirred the mule to greater activity—the other mule. Azul was ever active, and Ricardo could return to his sweetheart.

It was late in the afternoon and near the end of Ramon's shift. In half an hour his alternate would come to relieve him. If he was to carry out the plan which his tempestuous brain had evolved as he lay sleepless and tortured on his bed of straw through the night, he, Ramon, must act soon; and now, when they were absorbed in one another, when Ricardo's eyes saw no more than those of the bandaged mules, now was the time, the very nick of time!

So beheld Ramon creeping to the arrastrar where Azul was sweating at his toil. Behold him stealthily crawling to the further rim of the mill with an open knife in his hand, while the blue mule, unconscious of the danger, plodded around and around again to the spot where he hid, and the two lovers chatted blithely.

"Diablo!" muttered Ramon, fiercely. A knife flashed once, twice, and the deed was done. With an oath of satisfaction, Ramon crept back to his work, and the blue mule, apparently ignoring him, displayed some petulance toward a gnat which had alighted on his shoulder, then tranquilly pursued the long road which led to nowhere.

For how could Ramon have achieved his ignoble purpose by the murder of Azul? That would have been but half a revenge, while the retribution he had plotted was all-shattering and complete. He had laid the train for an explosion, an earthquake. The two strokes of his knife had cut the bandage from the mule's eyes, that was all; but was not that enough? Azul would grow dizzy and dizzier and would fall in his tracks; the mill would stop, and Ricardo, all given to his charmer, would not notice the episode. The alcalde would soon stride by, for had not the cunning Ramon sent a false message to lure him home? He would observe the idle mill and the fallen mule; he would see Ricardo neglecting his duty to dally with Teresa.

"Ah," he would say, "no such lazy, careless fellow shall be son of mine! Up, you loafer! Leave my daughter and attend to work! No, begone! I will not have you work for me. Poltroon! Never come near my arrastras or cast a shadow across my path again!" Ramon could see and hear it all, and his little soul dilated. Meanwhile Azul pursued his circular pilgrimage as constantly as the earth revolved in its orbit, and the lovers prattled as unceasingly as the spheres sang to each other in the heavens.

Then Ramon's successor came to relieve him, and he would be free to witness the denouement. The blue mule could not keep on his feet much longer; he must soon stagger and fall, and by that time the alcalde would pass. There could be no failure; all was going well; and Ramon, making a skilful detour, hid behind the alcalde's chicken-house to watch and wait and see his triumph.

Yes, there was the alcalde across the arroyo. He had received the message and left his store. Patience! But the mule! Why did he not pause? Why did he not stumble? Why did not the earth swim under his feet? Why did he not fall in a heap in the path? Ramon's blood boiled as he saw Azul steadily pulling the mill around as he had drawn it for hours, without a false step, without a sign of distress.

And see! The alcalde had come up. Ricardo raised his sombrero, and the great man nodded to the happy couple. With his business affairs going forward profitably, what masochist could object to polite attentions to his daughter from the eligible one?

But Ramon swore an oath unto himself. His heart was a lump of lead, and beads of perspiration stood on his brow. How he wished he had made another use of the knife! And all the time Azul was keeping on his course as serenely as Jupiter or the far Uranus. All things seemed unnatural and distorted to Ramon's turbulent brain. He had witnessed impossibilities. Now he imagined that the blue mule looked up at him and sneered sardonically, and it made him furious. Then he heard Azul laugh—a long, loud, irritating, maddening laugh.

When the mule brayed, Ramon sprang to his feet, beside himself with rage and chagrin, and started to flee. He could stay in Quitovic no longer. He would put miles between himself and the scene of his humiliation. But a heavy hand was laid violently upon him and bore him to the ground.

"So you are the thief, are you?" said a voice that made him quake. "I thought no better of you, fault-finder! Murmurador! It is you who has been eating my pullets!"

Alas for the quivering Ramon, he could utter no word of defence or protest, and little would it avail him if he could. The alcalde both made laws for Quitovic and executed them. With his strong arm, he dragged the wretch to his feet and led him off to the calaboose.

When Ricardo found the severed bandage, he divined the secret of it all, and he laughed softly. Always a man of gentle moods, he was too happy now to harbor a grudge. "Ah, mi favorito," he said to the mule, as he caressed him that night, "he did not know that you are blind! He did not know that it was all the same to you!" And Azul wore garlands, as well as Teresa, when they rode to the little adobe church at San Antonio, where Padre Francisco married and blessed them.

"Your blessing on Azul, too," craved Ricardo, with a coin in his hand—and the holy man's benediction rested on the blue mule of Quitovic.—(Argonaut.)

THE TURQUOISE AND SOME OTHER STONES

From The Chicago Record.

An old book written by Camillus Leonardus tells much of interest about jewels, and names a number of stones that either are no longer found or else were creations of the author's imagination. This is most probable when we read Leonardus' description of the alecoria, which, he says, not alone renders a man invisible, but, "being held in the mouth, allays thirst." The alecoria, he further states, is to be found only in the testicles of a capon that has lived seven years. "When the stone has become perfect," to quit this authority, "the capon does not drink." However, it is never larger than a large bean. Again, he tells of the bosozar, a "red, dusky, brittle and light stone," which is taken from the body of some animal, and is infallible against melancholy. He credits Queen Elizabeth with wearing a bosozar, and Charles V had four of them. The four rings, however, of most historical interest, were those presented by Pope Innocent to King John. The monarch was urged to note with extreme care the shape of the rings, their number, color and matter. The number 4 being a square, typified firmness of mind, fixed steadfastly on the four cardinal virtues. The blue color of the sapphire denoted faith, the green of the emerald hope, the crimson of the ruby charity, and the splendor of the opal good works. The rings themselves represented eternity, with neither beginning nor end; gold, which was the matter, and, according to Solomon, the most precious of metals, signified wisdom, more to be desired than riches and power.

A RELIGIOUS COMPROMISE.

From The Boston Transcript.

A certain Governor of Rhode Island, who lived in Newport and was a member of the Congregational Church, married a woman who was a Baptist, without any understanding as to the arrangement of religious matters. The first Sunday morning after the marriage the pair started out at church time together. They walked side by side as far as the corner of Church and Spring sts., where their accustomed ways to church diverged, and there they stopped. He stood with a little dogged bearing toward his church, she with the same bearing toward hers. "Well, wife," said the Governor, "which way shall we go?" She made no answer, nor did she make any sign of going his way. The Governor looked up at the beautiful spire and steeple door of Trinity Church, under the shadow of which they stood. "Ha!" said the Governor, "let's throw up both our churches and go it here!" And into Trinity they went, and were devout Episcopalians ever after.

MR. JENKE (who likes Miss Constance)—NO, I ASSURE YOU, MISS CONSTANCE I HAVE NEVER INDULGED IN FLIRTATION.
MISS CONSTANCE (who does not care for Mr. Jenke)—AH! PERHAPS YOU HAVE NEVER HAD ANY ENCOURAGEMENT.—(Quack.)

