

## MYTHS WOVEN ABOUT SIMPLE MEXICAN PEON

**PEDRO ALVARADO NOT MINING CROCUS HE HAS BEEN REPRESENTED TO BE.**

### EXTRAVAGANT TALES ARE WITHOUT TRUTH

**Believes Himself to Be Worth Millions, But in Reality Has Hard Work to Raise Comparatively Small Sum—Systematically Plundered by Those in His Employ—Is Famed Throughout Region for Generosity, But Shirks Publicity.**

Mexico City.—Pedro Alvarado, about whom fiction and fancy have woven tales of fabulous wealth and countless treasures, is a Mexican peon. Willingly he has submitted to the flattery and adulation which his fellow townsmen have lavished upon him on account of his ownership of a bonanza silver mine, albeit in the profits of that mine he has had but a meagre share. All the extravagant tales of Pedro Alvarado's wealth, of his ability to pay the Mexican national debt, and of his efforts to commission several regiments of Mexicans to subdue the Yaquis, are pure myths.

He believes himself to-day the wealthiest man of the universe, and no one has ever dared to dispossess him of the delusion he cherishes, that his mine is the greatest thing of its kind in the world. But notwithstanding he is reputed to be worth \$150,000,000, he has had the greatest trouble within the last three months to raise \$300,000. The fact that he only has been able to accomplish this at a sacrifice of practically all he possessed has still failed to bring him to a proper estimate of his fortune.

**Lack of Management.** As one approaches Parral on the branch of the Mexican Central railroad from Jimenez, tales of Alvarado's greatness are heard on all sides, if the average Mexican peons are doing the talking. If, on the other hand, one strikes the expatriated American who has been living in the vicinity for a year or two, he will confidentially tell one, "on the side," that the Mexicans are simply reporting what they have heard. If one fraternizes with the peons for any length of time one will find that their ideas of Alvarado's wealth are derived largely from the rich ore which their relatives employed at the mine abstract surreptitiously from time to time.

**Visit to Alvarado.** After becoming acquainted with the important developments at Parral, if one has the necessary influence and pull with somebody who is on friendly terms with Alvarado, an invitation to visit his property is soon forthcoming. While his ideas of hospitality differ in many respects from those to which we are accustomed in the United States, still, when showing his guests his property, he seems to forget his alleged greatness and becomes quite chummy with those he is entertaining.

The invitation to the writer of this article to go into the Palmilla mine called for a prompt attendance at the mouth of the shaft at 8 o'clock in the morning. The mine being situated on the very top of one of the highest peaks in the district, and the road leading to it being very difficult, the visitor was half an hour late.

**Sitting on Ore Pile.** Alvarado was found sitting on the apex of one of his richest ore piles. Without even so much as rising he extended his hand smilingly as the interpreter performed the introduction.

After a time Alvarado suggested a halt in the exploration, and seating himself passed around cigarettes and began to talk about his output and other items connected with the operation of the mine. The exaggeration he made use of was staggering. He thought nothing of saying that before his mine would afford employment to 100,000 men, and backed this up with the assertion that he would hoist 10,000 tons of ore every day, once he got the mine working as he planned to have it.

This sort of talk easily suggested the origin of many of the stories of wealth that one hears in Mexico and elsewhere concerning this interesting personage.

**Exploring the Mine.** Strange as it may seem, Alvarado is almost totally in ignorance of what is being done from day to day at his property. Those in charge of the development, who seem to be mostly relatives, are satisfied to give him a percentage of the daily receipts, pocketing a good deal of the balance and spending the rest upon silly operations that fail to make any appreciable improvement of the mine.

### EVER FEED HORSES MOLASSES? Experiments in New York Have Resulted in Remarkable Success.

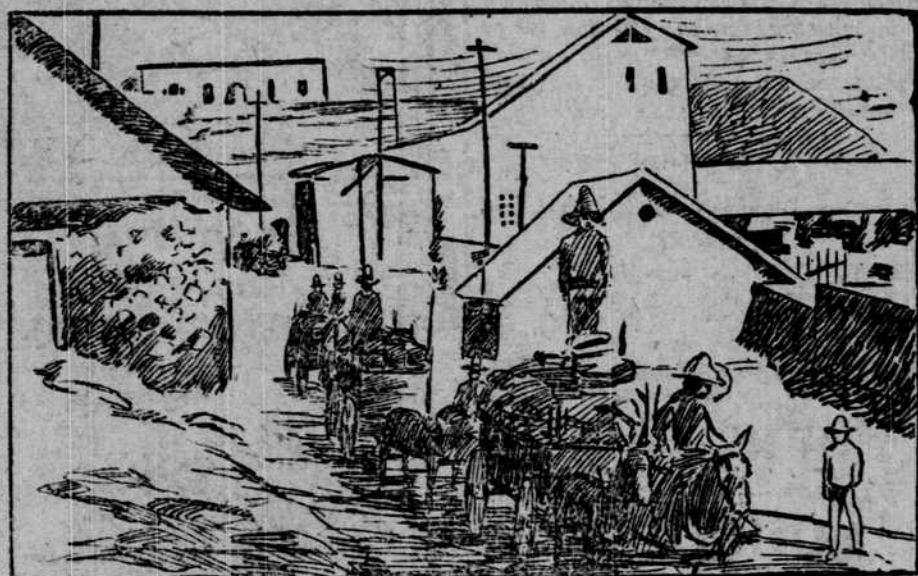
Feed your horse on old fashioned black New Orleans molasses. This is no joke. No animal has a sweeter tooth than the horse. And this characteristic of equus has not been sufficiently encouraged. There is nothing new in the proposition, but the common run of people never heard of it and will scarcely believe it. Look at those magnificent Percherons drawing great loads in our streets. See those giant Normandies, weighing 2,000 pounds each. Feast your eyes on those sturdy Clydesdales, those dapple grays, all to pull a few tons without flinching. All fed on molasses.

A firm in Brooklyn has been experimenting with molasses as a food for horses and tries to keep the results secret. writes Victor Smith in the New York Press. From an inquiry source I learn this: Two of the horses in the stable were given up as worthless. They got so thin and weak that they could not do a day's work, and were about to be retired on pensions at 11

After a while Alvarado suggested a continuation of the exploration of his mine, and showed the way into huge chambers cut into the rock from which great quantities of ore had already been abstracted. Here and there the interpreter pointed out big streaks of the rich chlorides of silver that go to make the property a bonanza. Then came the hardest part of the trip—the descent of what is known as a "chicken ladder," which is not any too agreeable for one unaccustomed to moving about in mines.

**The "Chicken Ladder."** The chicken ladder is a huge post inclined at about 45 degrees, upon which wooden blocks have been fastened about 14 inches apart. Wonderful to relate, the Mexican peons employed in the mines, carry on their backs suspended by heavy thongs across their foreheads loads varying in weight from 75 to 100 pounds. They mount the chicken ladders with the utmost celerity and do not seem to think the performance anything wonderful.

At the bottom of the chicken ladder a group of Mexicans were squatted in one of the drifts, consuming the ever-famous tortilla, which, together with the everlasting friola, makes up



Loaded Ore Wagons Leaving Mine.

the daily fare of these human beasts of burden.

Alvarado is careful to see that his visitors do not miss any important item in his mine, and on this occasion it was all of four hours before he had shown everything he wished to exhibit. Then came an invitation to dinner, and the invitation having been accepted, the mine owner accompanied his guest to the surface and gave the necessary orders to his cook.

While Alvarado was waiting the call of the cook his visitor had an excellent opportunity to study his personality and his character. He is a little man, weighing about 120 pounds, quick, alert and extremely nervous. He has a well-shaped head with prominent forehead, topped by a short crop of black hair. He wears a stubby beard that shows the lack of care. His features are pleasant, barring an unusually pointed nose, and when he smiles he shows some very good teeth.



Where the Richer Ores Are Sacked

He is 44 years old. He has a keen sense of humor, appreciates a joke, and is always ready both to give and take. His knowledge of things is limited to the confines of Chihuahua, his native state. He knows almost nothing of the world.

He is a devout Catholic, and in various little nooks in his mine chapels have been constructed, which he never passes without doffing his cap and making the sign of the cross.

**A Generous Giver.** His charity abounds on all sides, and he constantly has men employed in excess of his needs simply to keep their families out of want. When he was asked why he still retained the antiquated burros and ore wagons to carry his ore to Parral instead of installing a tramway, he said: "What would any man and 500 burros do if they had no ore to carry?" It is along this line or reasoning that Alvarado has built up a philosophy of his own, which, while it perhaps is comical, cannot help arouse certain admiration for his

years, when the molasses man came along. The horses were off their feed, probably sick at the stomach. They refused oats, hay, corn, clover and shorts. He looked them over and said he should like to try an altogether new regimen. "Go ahead," said the superintendent of the stables, in which there are over 200 magnificent animals, worth from \$700 to \$1,000 each. In two months one of the horses, a physical wreck, gained 400 pounds, and the other, a physical wreck, 355. Their coats were as satin. They were restored to duty and are still holding their own on molasses.

In administering the molasses—the blackest you can buy—first chop your hay into bits and to each peck add one pint of molasses. Mix thoroughly. The horse will do the rest. Use about the same quantity of syrup with oats, shorts, corn, etc. If you find that one horse may have a sweeter tooth than another, regulate the treat accordingly. So regulate it, in fact, that nothing will be left in the trough. You can buy good New Orleans (or Porto Rico) molasses for thirteen and one-half cents a gallon; by the hoghead or barrel for a little less. Try it on

character. Up to five months ago Alvarado's mine was hoisting about 150 tons a day, of which about 50 tons were sent away for treatment and the balance left on the dumps. The American mining engineer is almost overcome when told that it takes 500 men to accomplish such a little work, but of course, he does not appreciate the extraordinary conditions that prevail at the Palmilla.

While no one at the mine knows definitely what the ore yields per ton, it is believed that the high grade will average from \$250 to \$500 per ton, and that the low-grade will run from \$15 to \$35 a ton. The values are all present in silver, with some occasional lead ores.

The mine at the time of the visit referred to was making about 800 gallons of water per minute, but the pumps were quite able to take care of this flow. Here again one is put in close touch with Alvarado's lack of business sense. Instead of draining the mine by a tunnel which he could easily run at the base of the mountain, where his mine is located, he goes to work and has all the water pumped to the top of the hill, from where it flows to the bottom again



Through sluices built for the purpose of drenching.

The surface equipment at the Palmilla is on a part with the best which can be seen at any large American mine. His repair shops are of the best and he has never been known to turn down any suggestion for improvements that have ever been made to him, unless the offers interfered with his principles. There is a leak somewhere, however, between the gross profits and the net income, which up to this time no one has ever been able to explain. It is this unknown drain that has practically ruined Alvarado to-day and that has made it necessary for him to pledge all he owns to raise a bare \$300,000.

**He Shirks Publicity.** Strange as it may seem, Alvarado personally shirks publicity. On no account would he allow a photograph of himself to be taken, although quite willing to have his entire mine and equipment photographed under any

While the minister of agriculture of India pronounced against its use in unqualified terms, it was found in this country that it could play a profitable role in both beef and dairy production in at least one section of the United States. While the South African is said to revile its presence, the poorest inhabitants of the island of Sicily are said to largely subsist on its fruit for three or four months each year.

The average American traveling in Mexico can see no value whatever in the tremendous stretches of prickly pear upon the plateau, but the native peon grows these plants and similar ones in his orchards and gives them fully as careful attention as any plants which he attempts to cultivate.

Enthusiastic magazine writers would revolutionize conditions in the arid region by the establishment of plantations of prickly pear without spines, thus converting the most arid deserts into populous, prosperous communities. Experience teaches, however, that the spineless varieties of cultivation are not hardy under natural desert conditions; that all of the valuable spineless species which produce either fruit or forage in economic quantities require considerable precipitation at some time during the year; and that economic species are not known which thrive under a maximum temperature of less than ten degrees F. One exception to this may be noted in the case of opuntia arborescens of Colorado; but the amount of stock feed produced by this species is comparatively small and its distribution limited.

Conservative judgment based upon observation and experiment, on the other hand, would pronounce many species of prickly pear to be decidedly susceptible to cultivation and highly productive of both fruit and forage under proper conditions of temperature and moisture.

There are in Mexico many varieties of prickly pear which are found only in cultivation. This is especially true

The value of the world's railways is put at \$27,775,000,000.

your poor, old, broken down nag. He will live to bless you, and be pulling you around the country or the town at 27.

**London's Most Populous Parish.** The population of Islington appears at last to have reached high water mark, says the Pall Mall Gazette. A century ago a great part of the borough consisted of open country; but now all is thickly covered with houses, and as a result the population, at well over 300,000, is the largest of any district in the metropolis. When the development of the building estates was entered upon, the figures rose with astounding rapidity. In 1811 the percentage of increase was 39.7, in 1841 it stood at 49.4, and in 1851 it advanced to 70.7. A period of declining increased then set in, the figures at succeeding decennial periods being 63.1, 37.1, 32.3, and 12.8. In 1901 the population was 334,991, the percentage of the increase being only 4.9; while for the twelvemonth now reported upon the latter figure appears at 0.49. In other words, the population is all but stationary, and ere long an actual falling off may be looked for.

## IS THE TUNA A COMING FOOD?



DEVELOPING TUNAS FOR INTERMEDIATE CONSUMPTION

The prickly pear of the American and Australian, the Indian fig of the Englishman, the Barbary fig of the Frenchman, the tuna of the Spanish American, and the higos chumbos of the Spaniard is a fruit concerning which there are more varied beliefs, contradictory opinions, and grades of appreciation than concerning any known to us. The plant and its fruits are subjected to both praise and abuse.

While the Mexican prays that there may be no rain when the plants are in bloom that the fruit may set well and produce a good crop of tunas, the legislative assemblies in some of the Australian colonies pass laws looking toward their eradication.

While the Australian governments spend much money to eradicate the "weed," some ranchmen find that it can be fed to stock with profit.

While the southern Texan was improving the government in the early nineties to conduct investigations looking to the eradication of prickly pear, shrewd cattlemen and ingenious machinists were devising means whereby it could be divested of its objectionable characteristics at small expense and turned to a profitable use.

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**HOW POSIES ARE FAKED.** All Sort of Tricks Played on Unsuspecting Customers.

The gentle art of "faking" flowers is flourishing exceedingly, and one may purchase at many of the florists' shops green carnations and lilies of the valley. White flowers readily absorb the dye, and so perverts naturally are the green tints that only an expert well versed in the natural colors of flowers could possibly detect the deception.

The flowers are cut just before they are fully developed, and their stalks are then placed in a solution of aniline dye.

Flowers so treated readily absorb the solution, and pass it upward into the cells of the petals, thus converting the neutral white surface into a green tint.

Scarlet and green shades of color seem so far to be the most popular, but other tints are produced in the same way.

Genuine lovers of flowers taboo this color "faking" and regard it as a

## Washington Gossip

Interesting Bits of News Picked Up Here and There at the National Capital

### A MOVE FOR PUBLIC BATHS AND LAUNDRIES

**WASHINGTON.**—Preparatory to submitting their annual reports and estimates to congress at the coming session, the commissioners are considering the advisability of providing public baths in the District. They strongly favor the establishment of public baths, and last year recommended that an appropriation be made sufficient to build two, but congress turned it down. This year, it is stated, the commissioners will ask for an appropriation with which to establish public baths for the accommodation of pupils of the public schools, and the establishment of public laundries in connection with the public baths.

All of the commissioners are anxious to provide some kind of bathing or swimming scheme for the school children. It is their aim to make the scheme of such a nature as to have swimming lessons as part of the course of studies at the schools. They think every child, boy or girl, should learn the art of swimming.

In connection with the effort of the commissioners to secure these public baths it is also likely they will endeavor to establish one or two public laundries in the District. This idea is something new and novel in this part of the country, although such places are common throughout Europe.

It is the belief that a public laundry should be connected with every public bathhouse erected in the District and to have each laundry supplied with not less than 30 stationary wash tubs where the women of the poorer class can take their clothing to be washed, requiring only a trifling sum for soap and other incidentals. Connected with each laundry it is the idea to have a "drying-room," where the women can take clothes after the washing to be dried, either by hot air or steam.

### CONGRESS MAY SHAKE UP THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

It has, they say, been nullifying the state laws in two ways. The offense of which most complaint is made is that of permitting the shipment of liquor in unbroken packages from one state in the "dry" territory of an other state.

It is also asserted that the federal government is directly antagonizing states by licensing the sale of liquor in territory that has been made "dry" under state laws. In its anxiety to swell its internal revenue receipts, it is alleged, the government, through its internal revenue department, is constantly recognizing the lawless liquor element by issuing government licenses.

The fight of the session will center around the bill giving state control of interstate shipments of liquor into "dry" territory when they reach the state border, but the temperance forces may go further and demand that the federal government's internal revenue department shall not issue a government license to any person who has not first complied with all the requirements of the state law governing the sale of intoxicating liquors. The movement, in short, is to bring the federal government to the support of the states in the effort that is being made everywhere for the better regulation and control of the liquor traffic.

At the coming session the Anti-Saloon League of the United States, which has become a powerful organization, will make a strenuous effort to get legislation through. The league believes the time is ripe for the long-delayed federal legislation. With the fight against the liquor power raging successfully in more than half the states in the union, the league officers feel encouraged to believe that congress will no longer refuse to enact the desired legislation.

The states are doing handsomely, say men who are preparing to lead the temperance fight before congress at the coming session, but what has the federal government been doing?

### AIDS AT WHITE HOUSE ON THE ANXIOUS SEAT

At his own request, it is said, Lieut. Philip H. Sheridan has been relieved as military aid at the white house and returned to active service in his regiment, as he is desirous of working out his future in the army as a soldier in the field rather than enjoying the life of comparative idleness at Washington.

Lieut. Sheridan was one of the most popular aids at the white house during the last two seasons, and it was understood among his many friends that he would be enabled to retain the choice social position throughout the coming season. Recently, however, it developed that pressure was being brought by friends of other young officers to land the White House detail for them, and it is thought possible that the president may have decided upon a change in order to give others an opportunity to shine at the executive mansion. In this connection it is now rumored that a number of other officers will be relieved of the White House detail and

### AND LATER IT WAS 23 FOR THE FLORIST

THE other day one of the well-known clerks of the war department died. He had been a telegraph operator before he was appointed to the clerks' division in the war department for some years. When his fellow operators learned of his death they determined to send a floral tribute, and a collection was taken up and order given to the florist to make a large pile of flowers and mark in the center the figures "73," which in telegraph language means the signal between operators "My compliments and remembrance." On the day of the funeral the operators went to pay their last respects to their clerk, and were greatly shocked when they saw their floral tribute on the casket, for instead of the figures "73" there, in red immortels, on a white field of roses were the figures "23." It was too late to do anything, and as the casket was borne to the grave the pillow sent with "Compliments and remembrance" was marked with the message "23."

The next day an indignant committee of telegraphers waited on the florist for an explanation. All he could say was that he had never heard of

"73," but he knew "23" and thought that was what they wanted.

**Eternal Love.** The bride of three short months was weeping convulsively.

"What's the trouble?" queried the other fraction of the combine.

"You swore to live and cherish me until time should be no more. You said your love was eternal," she replied, "and now after a few weeks of married life you are cold and indifferent."

"Oh, well, you needn't make such a fuss about it," he growled. "How long did you expect eternal affection to last, anyway?"

**Not the Right Kind.** "I have been trying the so-called fruit cure," said the dyspeptic. "For the last month I have eaten nothing but fruit, but it hasn't benefited me in the least."

"That's strange," rejoined the healthy man. "Just look at me; I subsist entirely upon fruit."

"What kind of fruit?" queried the other.

"The fruit of my own labor," was the significant reply.