

IF SHE HAD LIVED.

If she had lived—how sweetly sad the thought;
Of all she might have been; what different ways
Her steps had led me, what more happy days
Her gentle presence to my life had brought,
If she had lived.

If she had lived, perhaps the golden prize
We call success had sooner neared my hand,
And, won at last, the favor of the land
Might seem more worthy to my happier eyes,
If she had lived.

If she had lived, the earth and air and sky
Might seem to hold a deeper right to be,
The leaves more sadly fall from shrub and tree,
The flowers she loved might sorrow more to die,
If she had lived.

If she had lived, perhaps each day were given
A fuller promise, as the east unbars
Morn, noon and sunset, twilight, and the stars
Might seem more radiant—earth more like to Heaven,
If she had lived.

If she had lived, perhaps the tide of years
Had borne me on more calmly to the sea,
Whose shore is Life—and Nature's harmony
Might sound a sweeter echo in my ears,
If she had lived.

—Arthur Cleveland Palmer, in Atlanta Constitution.

The Blue Mule of Quotovic.

By Harry E. Andrews.

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 charming 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, 50 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 center an upright revolving shaft from which a pole radiates horizontally to the outside of the circle; bound to the pole 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 250 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—once 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 re-

gard with aught out 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 poor who should incur the ill-will of the alcalde or of the alcalde's hairless dog trotting by his side!

Another traveler 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. "Mucho 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, senorita?"
"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 a 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 the same 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 sumptuously goes with mules and in Quotovic. 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 arrastrars 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 Ricardo had other and suitable expressions of attachment and admiration for Senorita 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 it is 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 in Quotovic.

"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."

"Creame, 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-morrows 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 arrastrars, 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 soon act; 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, behold 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 chattered 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 him 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 daily with Teresa. "Ah," he would say, "no such lazy, careless fellow shall be a 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 arrastrars 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 wit-



ANOTHER TRAVELER CAME DOWN THE PATH.

ness 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 skillful 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 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 magnate 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 Quotovic 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! murmurer! It is you who has been eating my pullets!"

Alas for the quivering Ramon, he could not utter one word of defense or protest, and little would it avail him if he could. The alcalde both made laws for Quotovic 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 Quotovic.—San Francisco Argonaut.

A SODA WATER FETISH.

African Savages Overawed by a Pop Bottle.

The power of superstition as well as the absurdity of it is well illustrated in the following anecdote: Two English officers recently visited the native town of Bendi, in West Africa, which is the headquarters of a fetish known as the "jong juju." The natives have surrounded their rites with such mystery that these were the first whites whom they had permitted to enter the town. Their reception by the chiefs was attended with a peculiar ceremony. The proceedings opened by the headman of the town walking round the ring holding a skull in one hand and wildly gesticulating with the other, at the same time uttering curses upon all the white men and their descendants if any harm befell the townspeople by reason of their visit.

After this the head friendly chief who came with the expedition walked round the circle calling down maledictions upon the natives if any harm befell the white men during their visit. For his fetish instead of a skull he carried in his hand an ordinary bottle of soda water, and at the critical moment, when he had exhausted his list of curses, he leaped into the ring and opened the bottle, and the cork went off with a loud report.

The effect was as ridiculous as it was instantaneous. The natives with one accord, chiefs, women and children, straightway fled. The people were profoundly impressed with what they called "the white man's God in a bottle." During the whole journey the letting off of soda-water corks always had the desired effect of impressing the people with the power of the white man's "juju."—Youth's Companion.

A Mistaken Prophet.

Prophecy is often rendered absurd by the events, but it is not often that one comes across quite so ludicrous a disparity between forecast and fact as the following. Turning over the old numbers of Chambers' Journal we come across an article (May 20, 1837) on the project of penny postage, then under discussion. Says the writer: "We consider this one of the most visionary schemes ever put forth. Mr. Hill, like most political economists, commits the blunder of making no allowance for the passions, the feelings, the habits and the stupidities of mankind. Imagine everyone having to buy stamps beforehand for his letters, or having to pay a penny with every letter posted! * * * Looking at human society as at present existing, we are sure that it would never work." How many present-day criticisms of new ideas will read equally comically with this in 66 years' time?—Westminster Gazette.

Memory Quickened.

Dude (to barber)—How much do I owe you?

Barber—The same as you usually pay, sir.

"I don't take the trouble to remember what you have charged! How much is it?"

"Twenty cents."

"O, but you have charged me only 15 cents before!"—Humoristische Blaetter.

An Explanation.

Dr. Liddell was a humorist in an academic way. "How long have you been a member of the university, my lord?" he said to a young man who had omitted to "cap him" when they met in the street. "A week, sir," the youth answered. "I understand," said the dean; "puppies cannot see till they are eight days old."—London Saturday Review.

No Complaint.

"Who's dead?" inquired a man of the sexton, who was digging a grave in the churchyard. "Old Squire Thornback." "What complaint?" Sexton, without looking up: "No complaint; everybody satisfied."—Household Words.

—In various English counties people say that if the ice bears a goose before Christmas it will not bear a duck after. In some Midland districts this is varied by the substitution of a man for the goose, and a mouse for the duck.

THE NEW ADJUTANT GENERAL.

The President Appoints Col. Henry C. Corbin to Succeed Gen. Breck. WASHINGTON, Feb. 26.—The president to-day appointed Col. Henry C. Corbin adjutant general of the army



COL. HENRY C. CORBIN. (New Adjutant General of the Army.)

to succeed Gen. Samuel Breck, retired on account of age. Gen. Breck had held office only since September 11 last, when he succeeded Adj. Gen. Ruggles.

Col. Henry C. Corbin is a native of Ohio and entered the army as an enlisted man at the beginning of the late war. He had a most brilliant career and earned brevets for gallant and meritorious service at Decatur and Nashville. In 1866 he was transferred to the regular service as second lieutenant of the Seventeenth United States Infantry. President Hayes appointed him to the staff in 1880, making him a major and assistant adjutant general. Gen. Corbin has seen service in the Indian campaigns at Pine Ridge, in Arizona and elsewhere. Before promotion he was assistant to the adjutant general and before coming to Washington he was adjutant general of the department of the east at New York.

BAD FIRE AT LOUISVILLE.

Three Big Buildings of the National Tobacco Company Destroyed, Throwing 1,400 People Out of Employment.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Feb. 26.—The picking, drying and steaming warehouses of the National Tobacco company, situated at Twenty-Fourth and Main streets, were totally destroyed by fire yesterday. The loss will amount to \$1,000,000, fully covered by insurance. In the drying building, which caught first, 200 hands, mostly women and children, were employed, but the majority of these escaped safely, only a few being slightly injured, as did 200 who were at work in the steaming building. In the four-story warehouse 1,000 men were at work, but they nearly all escaped without injury. George Tishendorf, John Peckham and William Sample stayed too long in the building and had to jump for their lives. The two latter received fatal injuries. Over 1,400 people are thrown out of employment.

DISLOYAL PRIEST.

Peculiar Talk of Father Weber at Kingston, N. Y., at a Funeral.

ROUNDTOWN, N. Y., Feb. 26.—Roman Catholics in this city generally are in a state of great indignation over the declaration reported to have been made by Father Weber at a funeral. Father Weber, it is alleged, said that it was the duty of every loyal Catholic to take up arms for Spain against the United States in case war was declared against that country and that every patriotic Catholic should do all in his power to aid Spain, a Catholic nation. Continuing his remarks, it is said, the priest declared that President McKinley and the members of his cabinet ought to be blown up and that the American flag was not the one for loyal Catholics to fight for under any circumstances.

BONDS NOT FLOATED.

The "South Bell" Arkansas Great Projected Railroad, Has Been Abandoned.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Feb. 26.—Arkansas' great projected railroad, the Springfield, Little Rock & Gulf, better known as the "South Bell road," to which was voted by the last legislature 1,000 acres of state lands for every mile of road completed, has gone by the board. Information was made public here that J. A. Hinsey, the president, had telegraphed the board of directors here that the bonds for raising the money, \$14,000,000, could not be floated as he anticipated and that work would have to be stopped. About four miles of roadbed have been completed.

MAY BE DEFEATED.

Opponents of the "Force" Bill in Kentucky Legislature Hope to Kill It by Delay.

FRANKFORT, Ky., Feb. 26.—At the afternoon session of the house, an attempt to abandon the regular order of business and force the passage of the Goebel election or "force" bill, resulted in the loss of two or three friends of the measure. On a test vote, 51 of the 100 members voted against the measure. Its enemies do not believe they can prevent its passage many days longer, but they believe it is killed, or can be killed, by mere waste of time and by expiration of the session before it can be passed over a veto and put into effect.

The Hayes Home Levied Upon.

FREMONT, O., Feb. 26.—The homestead of the late ex-President R. B. Hayes, known as Spiegel grove, was levied upon by the sheriff to satisfy a judgment obtained for \$5,000 damages awarded Mrs. Addie Smith, of this city. Mrs. Smith was given a judgment for injuries received in a runaway caused by a dog owned by the Hayes estate.