

A RODEO AT LOS OJOS.

BY FREDERIC REMINGTON.

THE sun beat down on the dry grass, and the "punchers" were squatting about in groups in front of the straggling log and *adobe* buildings which constituted the outlying ranch of Los Ojos.

Mr. Johnnie Bell, the *capitan* in charge, was walking about in his heavy *chappar-ras*, a slouch hat, and a white "biled" shirt. He was chewing his long yellow mustache, and gazing across the great plain of Bavicora with set and squinting eyes. He passed us and repassed us, still gazing out, and in his long Texas drawl said, "Thar's them San Miguel fellers."

I looked, but I could not see any San Miguel fellows in the wide expanse of land.

"Hyar, crawl some horses, and we'll go out and meet 'em," continued Mr. Bell; and suiting the action, we mounted our horses and followed him. After a time I made out tiny specks in the atmospheric wave which rises from the heated land, and in half an hour could plainly make out a cavalcade of horsemen. Presently breaking into a gallop, which movement was imitated by the other party, we bore down upon each other, and only

stopped when near enough to shake hands, the half-wild ponies darting about and rearing under the excitement. Greetings were exchanged in Spanish, and the peculiar shoulder tap, or abbreviated embrace, was indulged in. Doubtless a part of our outfit was as strange to Governor Terraza's men—for he is the *patron* of San Miguel—as they were to us.

My imagination had never pictured before anything so wild as these leather-clad *vaqueros*. As they removed their hats to greet Jack, their unkempt locks blew over their faces, back off their foreheads, in the greatest disorder. They were clad in terra-cotta buckskin, elaborately trimmed with white leather, and around their lower legs wore heavy cowhide as a sort of legging. They were fully armed, and with their jingling spurs, their flapping ropes and buckskin strings, and with their gay *serapes* tied behind their saddles, they were as impressive a cavalcade of desert-scramperers as it has been my fortune to see. Slowly we rode back to the corrals, where they dismounted.

Shortly, and unobserved by us until at hand, we heard the clatter of hoofs, and

leaving in their wake a cloud of dust, a dozen "punchers" from another outfit bore down upon us as we stood under the *ramada* of the ranch-house, and pulling up with a jerk, which threw the ponies on their haunches, the men dismounted and approached, to be welcomed by the master of the *rodeo*.

A few short orders were given, and three mounted men started down to the springs, and after charging about, we could see that they had roped a steer, which they led, bawling and resisting, to the ranch, where it was quickly thrown and slaughtered. Turning it on its back, after the manner of the old buffalo-hunters, it was quickly disrobed and cut up into hundreds of small pieces, which is the method practised by the Mexican butchers, and distributed to the men.

In Mexico it is the custom for the man who gives the "round-up" to supply fresh beef to the visiting cow-men; and on this occasion it seemed that the pigs, chickens, and dogs were also embraced in the bounty of the *patron*, for I noticed one piece which hung immediately in front of my quarters had two chickens roosting on the top of it, and a pig and a dog tugging vigorously at the bottom.

The horse herds were moved in from the *llano* and rounded up in the corral, from which the "punchers" selected their mounts by roping, and as the sun was westerly they disappeared, in obedience to orders, to all points of the compass. The men took positions back in the hills and far out on the plain; there, building a little fire, they cook their beef, and, enveloped in their *serapes*, spend the night. At early dawn they converge on the ranch, driving before them such stock as they may.

In the morning we could see from the ranch-house a great semicircle of gray on the yellow plains. It was the thousands of cattle coming to the *rodeo*. In an hour more we could plainly see the cattle, and behind them the *vaqueros* dashing about, waving their *serapes*. Gradually they converged on the *rodeo* ground, and, enveloped in a great cloud of dust and with hollow bellowings, like the low pedals of a great organ, they begin to mill, or turn about a common centre, until gradually quieted by the enveloping cloud of horsemen. The *patron* and the captains of the neighboring ranches, af-

ter an exchange of long-winded Spanish formalities, and accompanied by ourselves, rode slowly from the ranch to the herd, and entering it, passed through and through and around in solemn procession. The cattle part before the horsemen, and the dust rises so as to obscure to unaccustomed eyes all but the silhouettes of the moving thousands. This is an important function in a cow country, since it enables the owners or their men to estimate what numbers of the stock belong to them, to observe the brands, and to inquire as to the condition of the animals and the numbers of calves and "mavericks," and to settle any dispute which may arise therefrom.

All controversy, if there be any, having been adjusted, a part of the "punchers" move slowly into the herd, while the rest patrol the outside, and hold it. Then a movement soon begins. You see a figure dash at about full speed through an apparently impenetrable mass of cattle; the stock becomes uneasy and moves about, gradually beginning the milling process, but the men select the cattle bearing their brand, and course them through the herd; all becomes confusion, and the cattle simply seek to escape from the ever-recurring horsemen. Here one sees the matchless horsemanship of the "punchers." Their little ponies, trained to the business, respond to the slightest pressure. The cattle make every attempt to escape, dodging in and out and crowding among their kind; but right on their quarter, gradually forcing them to the edge of the herd, keeps the "puncher," until finally, as a last effort, the cow and the calf rush through the supporting line; when, after a terrific race, she is turned into another herd, and is called "the cut."

One who finds pleasure in action can here see the most surprising manifestations of it. A huge bull, wild with fright, breaks from the herd, with lowered head and whitened eye, and goes charging off indifferent to what or whom he may encounter, with the little pony pattering in his wake. The cattle run at times with nearly the intensity of action of a deer, and whip and spur are applied mercilessly to the little horse. The process of "tailing" is indulged in, although it is a dangerous practice for the man, and reprehensible from its brutality to the cattle. A man will pursue a bull at top speed, will reach over and grasp the tail

COMING TO THE RODEO.



of the animal, bring it to his saddle, throw his right leg over the tail, and swing his horse suddenly to the left, which throws the bull rolling over and over. That this method has its value I have seen in the case of pursuing "mavericks," where an unsuccessful throw was made with the rope, and the animal was about to enter the thick timber; it would be impossible to coil the rope again, and an escape would follow but for the wonderful dexterity of these men in this accomplishment. The little calves become separated from their mothers, and go bleating about; their mothers respond by bellows, until pandemonium seems to reign. The dust is blinding, and the "puncher" becomes grimy and soiled; the horses lather; and in the excitement the desperate men do deeds which convince you of their faith that "a man can't die till his time comes." At times a bull is found so skilled in these contests that he cannot be displaced from the herd; it is then necessary to rope him and drag him to the point desired;

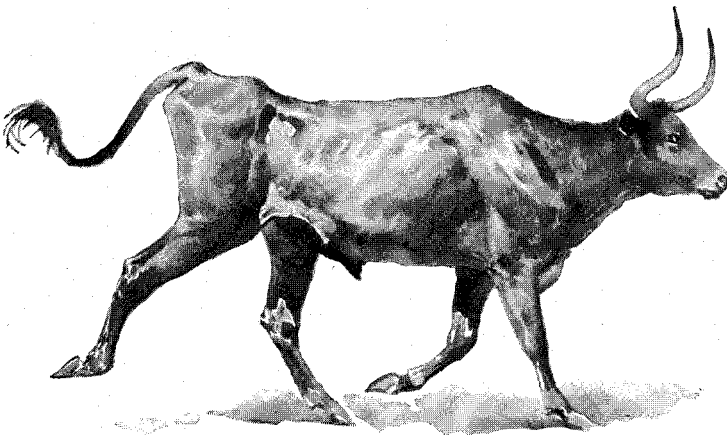
The whole scene was inspiring to a degree, and well merited Mr. Yorick's observation that "it is the sport of kings; the image of war, with twenty-five per cent. of its danger."

Fresh horses are saddled from time to time, but before high noon the work is done, and the various "cut-offs" are herded in different directions. By this time the dust had risen until lost in the sky above, and as the various bands of cowboys rode slowly back to the ranch, I observed their demoralized condition. The economy *per force* of the Mexican people prompts them to put no more cotton into a shirt than is absolutely necessary, with the consequence that, in these cases, their shirts had pulled out from their belts and their *serapes*, and were flapping in the wind; their mustaches and their hair were perfectly solid with dust, and one could not tell a bay horse from a black.

Now come the cigarettes and the broiling of beef. The bosses were invited to sit at our table, and as the work of cutting and branding had yet to be done,

no time was taken for ablutions. Opposite me sat a certain individual who, as he engulfed his food, presented a grimy waste of visage only broken by the rolling of his eyes and the snapping of his teeth.

We then proceeded to the corrals, which were made in stockaded form from gnarled and many-shaped posts set on an end. The cows and calves were bunched on one side in fearful ex-



*Frederick Remond
Jan 4 1881
Los Angeles*

A MEXICAN STEER.

and I noticed "punchers" ride behind recalcitrant bulls and, reaching over, spur them. I also saw two men throw simultaneously for an immense creature, when, to my great astonishment, he turned tail over head and rolled on the ground. They had both sat back on their ropes together.

pectancy. A fire was built just outside of the bars, and the branding-irons set on. Into the corrals went the "punchers," with their ropes coiled in their hands. Selecting their victims, they threw their ropes, and, after pulling and tugging, a bull calf would come out of the bunch, whereat two men would set upon him and



TAILING A BULL.

"rastle" him to the ground. It is a strange mixture of humor and pathos, this mutilation of calves—humorous when the calf throws the man, and pathetic when the man throws the calf. Occasionally an old cow takes an unusual interest in her offspring, and charges boldly into their midst. Those men who cannot escape soon enough throw dust in her eyes, or put their hats over her horns. And in this case there were some big steers which had been "cut out" for purposes of work at the plough and turned in with the young stock; one old grizzled veteran manifest-

ed an interest in the proceedings, and walked boldly from the bunch, with his head in the air and bellowing; a wild scurry ensued, and hats and *serapes* were thrown to confuse him. But over all this the "punchers" only laugh, and go at it again. In corral roping they try to catch the calf by the front feet, and in this they become so expert that they rarely miss. As I sat on the fence, one of the foremen, in play, threw and caught my legs as they dangled.

When the work is done and the cattle are again turned into the herd, the men re-



A STUDY OF ACTION.

pair to the *casa* and indulge in games and pranks. We had shooting matches and hundred-yard dashes; but I think no records were broken, since "punchers" on foot are odd fish. They walk as though they expected every moment to sit down. Their knees work outward, and they have a decided "hitch" in their gait; but once let them get a foot in a stirrup and a grasp on the horn of the saddle, and a dynamite cartridge alone could expel them from the saddle. When loping over the plain the "puncher" is the epitome of equine grace, and if he desires to look behind him he simply shifts his whole body to one side and lets the horse go as he pleases. In the pursuit of cattle at a *rodeo* he leans forward in his saddle, and with his arms elevated to his shoulders he "plugs" in his spurs and makes his pony fairly sail. While going

at this tremendous speed he turns his pony almost in his stride, and no matter how a bull may twist and swerve about, he is at his tail as true as a magnet to the pole. The Mexican "punchers" all use the "ring bit," and it is a fearful contrivance. Their saddle-trees are very short, and as straight and quite as shapeless as a "saw-buck pack-saddle." The horn is as big as a dinner plate, and taken altogether it is inferior to the California tree. It is very hard on horses' backs, and not at all comfortable for a rider who is not accustomed to it.

They all use hemp ropes which are imported from some of the southern states of the republic, and carry a lariat of hair which they make themselves. They work for from eight to twelve dollars a month in Mexican coin, and live on the most simple diet imaginable. They are mostly



MOUNTING A WILD ONE.

peoned, or in hopeless debt to their *patrons*, who go after any man who deserts the range and bring him back by force. A "puncher" buys nothing but his gorgeous buckskin clothes, and his big silver-mounted straw hat, his spurs, his *riata*, and his *cincha* rings. He makes his *teguas* or buckskin boots, his heavy leggings, his saddle, and the *patron* furnishes his arms. On the round-up, which lasts about half of the year, he is furnished beef, and also kills game. The balance of the year he is kept in an outlying camp to turn stock back on the range. These camps are often the most simple things, consisting of a pack containing his "grub," his saddle, and *serape*, all lying under a tree, which does duty as a house. He carries a flint and steel, and has a piece of sheet-iron for a stove,



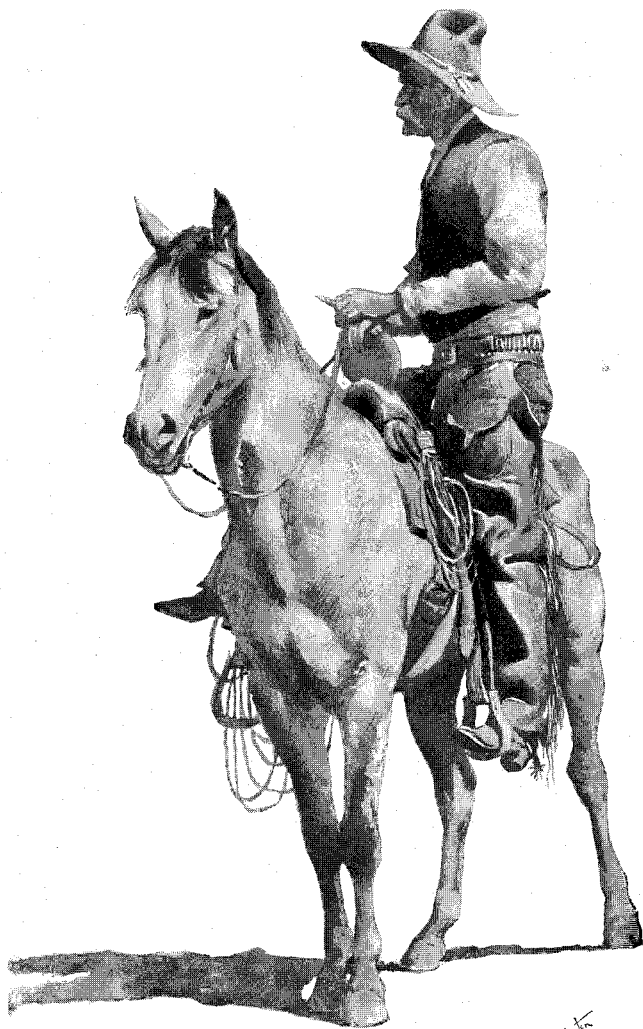
Frederic Remington
"La Oja"
Mexico.

WAVING SERAPE TO DRIVE CATTLE.

and a piece of pottery for boiling things in. This part of their lives is passed in a long siesta, and a man of the North who has a local reputation as a lazy man should see a Mexican "puncher" loaf, in order to comprehend that he could never achieve distinction in the land where *poco tiempo* means forever. Such is the life of the *vaquero*—a brave fellow—a fatalist, with less wants than the pony he rides, a rather thoughtless man who lacks many virtues, but when he mounts his horse or casts his riata, all men must bow and call him master.

The *baile*—the song—the man with the guitar—and under all this *dolce farniente* are their little hates and bickerings, as thin as cigarette smoke and as enduring as time. They reverence their parents, they honor their *patron*, and love their *compadre*. They are grave, and grave even when gay; they eat little, they think less, they meet death calmly, and it's a terrible scoundrel who goes to hell from Mexico.

The Anglo-American foremen are another type entirely. They have all the rude virtues. The intelligence which is never lacking and the perfect courage which never fails are found in such men as Tom Bailey and Johnnie Bell—two Texans who are the superiors of any cowmen I have ever seen. I have seen them chase the "mavericks" at top speed over a country so difficult that a man could hardly pass on foot out of a walk. On one occasion Mr. Bailey, in hot pursuit of a bull, leaped a tremendous fallen log at top speed, and in the next instant "tailed" and threw the bull as it was about to enter the timber. Bell



JOHNNIE BELL OF LOS OJOS.

can ride a pony at a gallop while standing up on his saddle, and while Cossacks do this trick they are enabled to accomplish it easily from the superior adaptability of their saddles to the purpose. In my association with these men of the frontier I have come to greatly respect their moral fibre and their character. Modern civilization, in the process of educating men beyond their capacity, often succeeds in vulgarizing them, but these natural men possess minds which, though lacking all embellishment, are chaste and simple, and utterly devoid of a certain

flippancy which passes for smartness in situations where life is not so real. The fact that a man bolts his food or uses his table-knife as though it were a deadly weapon counts very little in the game these men play in their lonely range life. They are not complicated, these children of nature, and they never think one thing and say another. Mr. Bell was wont to squat against a fireplace—*à la* Indian—and dissect the peculiarities of the audience in a most ingenuous way. It never gave offence either, because so guileless. Mr. Bailey, after listening carefully to a theological tilt, observed that "he believed he'd be religious if he knewed how."

The jokes and pleasantries of the American "puncher" are so close to nature often, and so generously veneered with heart-rending profanity, as to exclude their becoming classic. The cow-men are good friends and virulent haters, and, if justified in their own minds, would shoot a man instantly, and regret the necessity, but not the shooting, afterwards.

Among the dry, saturnine faces of the cow "punchers" of the Sierra Madre was one which beamed with human instincts, which seemed to say, "Welcome, stranger!" He was the first impression my companion and myself had of Mexico, and as broad as are its plains and as high its mountains, yet looms up William on a higher pinnacle of remembrance.

We crawled out of a Pullman in the early morning at Chihuahua, and fell into the hands of a little black man, with telescopic pantaloons, a big sombrero with the edges rolled up, and a grin on his good-humored face like a yawning *barranca*.

"Is you frens of Mista Jack's?"

"We are."

"Gimme your checks. Come dis way," he said; and without knowing why we should hand ourselves and our property over to this uncouth personage, we did it, and from thence on over the deserts and in the mountains, while shivering in the snow by night and by day, there was Jack's man to bandage our wounds, lend us tobacco when no one else had any, to tuck in our blankets, to amuse us, to comfort us in distress, to advise and admonish, until the last *adiós* were waved from the train as it again bore us to the border-land.

On our departure from Chihuahua to meet Jack out in the mountains the stage was overloaded, but a proposition to leave William behind was beaten on the first ballot; it was well vindicated, for without William the expedition would have been a "march from Moscow." There was only one man in the party with a sort of bass-relief notion that he could handle the Spanish language, and the relief was a very slight one—almost imperceptible—the politeness of the people only keeping him from being mobbed. But William could speak German, English, and Spanish, separately, or all at once.

William was so black that he would make a dark hole in the night, and the top of his head was not over four and a half feet above the soles of his shoes. His legs were all out of drawing, but forty-five winters had not passed over him without leaving a mind which, in its sphere of life, was agile, resourceful, and eminently capable of grappling with any complication which might arise. He had personal relations of various kinds with every man, woman, and child whom we met in Mexico. He had been thirty years a cook in a cow camp, and could evolve banquets from the meat on a bull's tail, and was wont to say, "I don' know so much 'bout dese yar stoves, but gie me a camp-fire an' I can make de bes' thing yo' ever threw your lip ober."

When in camp, with his little cast-off English tourist cap on one side of his head, a short black pipe tipped at the other angle to balance the effect, and two or three stripes of white corn meal across his visage, he would move round the camp-fire like a cub bear around a huckleberry bush, and in a low, authoritative voice have the Mexicans all in action, one hurrying after water, another after wood, some making *tortillas*, or cutting up venison, grinding coffee between two stones, dusting bedding, or anything else. The British Field-Marshal air was lost in a second when he addressed "Mister Willie" or "Mister Jack," and no fawning courtier of the Grand Monarch could purr so low.

On our coach ride to Bavicora, William would seem to go up to any ranch-house on the road, when the sun was getting low, and after ten minutes' conversation with the grave Don who owned it, he would turn to us with a wink, and say:



A MODERN SANCHO PANZA.

"Come right in, gemmen. Dis ranch is yours." Sure enough, it was. Whether he played us for major-generals or governors of states I shall never know, but certainly we were treated as such.

On one occasion William had gotten out to get a hat blown off by the wind, and when he came up to view the wreck of the turn-over of the great Concord coach, and saw the mules going off down the hill with the front wheels, the ground littered with boxes and débris, and the men all lying about, groaning or fainting in agony, William scratched his wool, and with just a suspicion of humor on his face he ventured, "If I'd been hyar, I would be in two places fore now, shuah," which was some consolation to William, if not to us.

In Chihuahua we found William was in need of a clean shirt, and we had gotten one for him in a shop. He had selected one with a power of color enough to make the sun stand still, and with great

glass diamonds in it. We admonished him that when he got to the ranch the "punchers" would take it away from him.

"No, sah; I'll take it off 'fore I get thar."

William had his commercial instincts developed in a reasonable degree, for he was always trying to trade a silver watch, of the Captain Cuttle kind, with the Mexicans. When asked what time it was, William would look at the sun and then deftly cant the watch around, the hands of which swung like compasses, and he would show you the time within fifteen minutes of right, which little discrepancy could never affect the value of a watch in the land of *mañana*.

That he possessed tact I have shown, for he was the only man at Bavicora whose relations with the *patron* and the smallest, dirtiest Indian "kid," were easy and natural. Jack said of his popularity, "He stands 'way in with the Chinese cook;

gets the warm corner behind the stove." He also had courage, for didn't he serve out the ammunition in Texas when his "outfit" was in a life and death tussle with the Comanches? did he not hold a starving crowd of Mexican teamsters off the grub-wagon until the boys came back?

There was only one feature of Western life with which William could not assimilate, and that was the horse. He had trusted a bronco too far on some remote occasion, which accounted partially for the kinks in his legs; but after he had recovered fully his health he had pinned his faith to *burros*, and forgotten the glories of the true cavalier.

"No, sah, Mister Jack, I don' care for to ride dat horse. He's a good horse, but I jes hit de flat for a few miles 'fore I rides him," he was wont to say when the cowboys gave themselves over to an irresponsible desire to see a horse kill a man. He would then go about his duties, uttering gulps of suppressed laughter, after the negro manner, safe in the knowledge that the *burro* he affected could "pack his freight."

One morning I was taking a bath out of our wash-basin, and William, who was watching me and the coffee-pot at the same time, observed that "if one of dese people down hyar was to do dat dere, dere'd be a funeral 'fo' twelve o'clock."

William never admitted any social affinity with Mexicans, and as to his own people, he was wont to say: "Never have went with people of my own color. Why, you go to Brazos to-day, and dey tell you dere was Bill, he go home come night, an' de balance of 'em be looking troo de grates in de morning." So William lives happily in the "small social puddle," and always reckons to "treat any friends of Mister Jack's right." So if you would know William, you must do it through Jack.

It was on rare occasions that William, as master of ceremonies, committed any indiscretion, but one occurred in the town of Guerrero. We had gotten in rather late, and William was sent about the town to have some one serve supper for us. We were all very busy when William "blew in" with a great sputtering, and said, "Is yous ready for dinner, gemmen?" "Yes, William," we answered, whereat William ran off. After waiting a long time, and being very hungry, we concluded to go

and "rustle" for ourselves, since William did not come back and had not told us where he had gone. After we had found and eaten a dinner, William turned up, gloomy and dispirited. We inquired as to his mood. "I do declar', gemmen, I done forget dat you didn't know where I had ordered dat dinner; but dere's de dinner an' nobody to eat it, an' I's got to leave dis town 'fore sunup, pay for it, or die." Unless some one had advanced the money, William's two other alternatives would have been painful.

The romance in William's life even could not be made mournful, but it was the "mos' trouble" he ever had, and it runs like this: Some years since William had saved up four hundred dollars, and he had a girl back in Brazos to whom he had pinned his faith. He had concluded to assume responsibilities, and to create a business in a little mud town down the big road. He had it arranged to start a travellers' eating-house; he had contracted for a stove and some furniture; and at about that time his dishonest employer had left Mexico for parts unknown, with all his money. The stove and furniture were yet to be paid for, so William entered into hopeless bankruptcy, lost his girl, and then attaching himself to Jack, he bravely set to again in life's battle. But I was glad to know that he had again conquered, for before I left I overheard a serious conversation between William and the *patron*. William was cleaning a frying-pan by the camp-fire light, and the *patron* was sitting enveloped in his *serape* on the other side.

"Mist' Jack, I's got a girl. She's a Mexican."

"Why, William, how about that girl up in the Brazos?" inquired the *patron*, in surprise.

"Don' care about her now. Got a new girl."

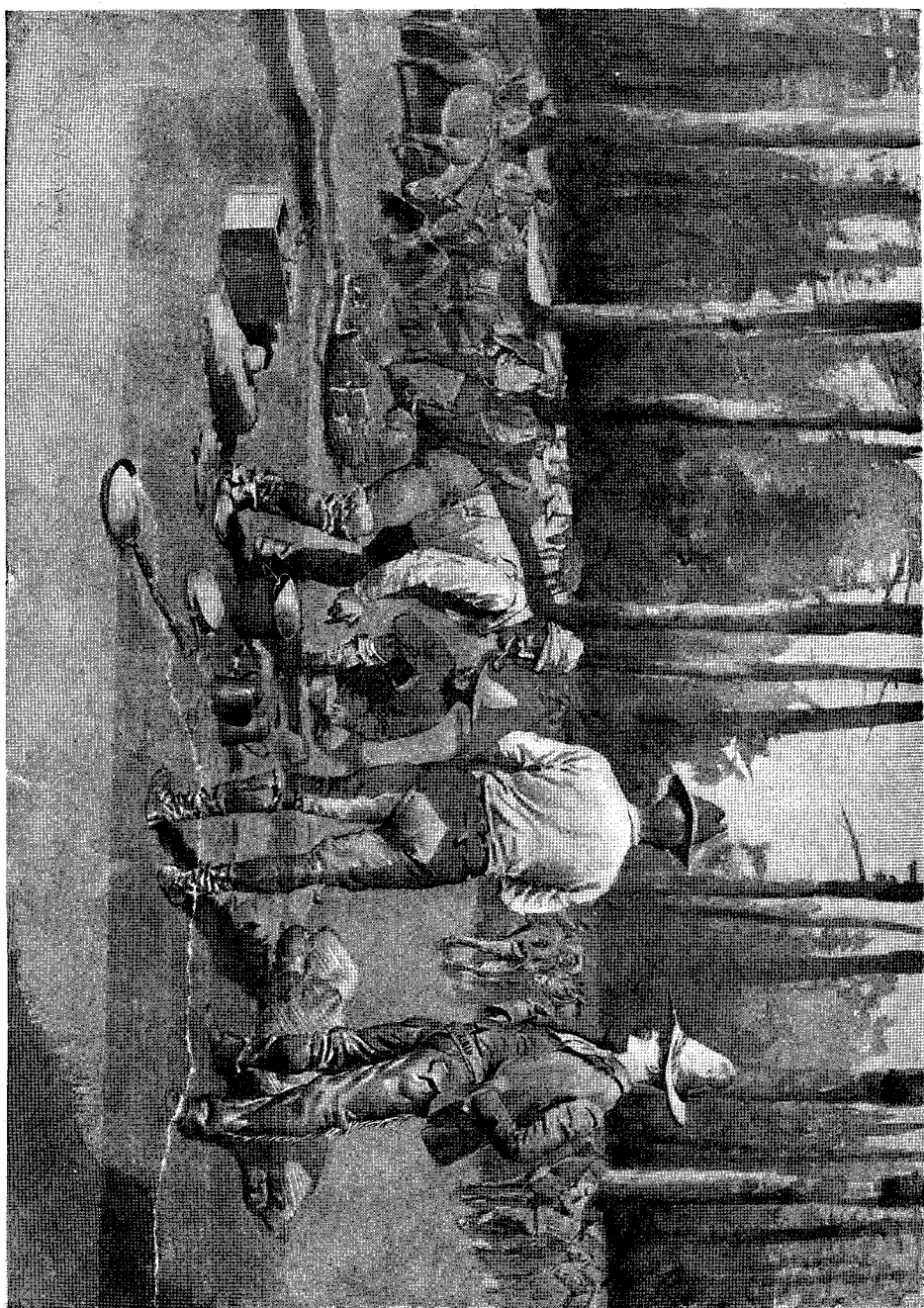
"Well, I suppose you can have her, if you can win her," replied the *patron*.

"Can I, sah? Well, den, I's win her already, sah—dar!" chuckled William.

"Oh! very well, then, William, I will give you a wagon, with two yellow ponies, to go down and get her; but I don't want you to come back to Bavicora with an empty wagon."

"No, sah; I won't, sah," pleasedly responded the lover.

"Does that suit you, then?" asked the *patron*.



WILLIAM IN ACTION.

"Yes, sah; but, sah, wonder, sah, might I have the two old whites?"

"All right! You can have the two old white ponies;" and, after a pause, "I will give you that old *adobe* up in La Pinta, and two speckled steers; and I don't want you to come down to the ranch except on *baile* nights, and I want you to slide in then just as quiet as any other outsider," said the *patron*, who was testing William's loyalty to the girl.

"All right! I'll do that."

"William, do you know that no true Mexican girl will marry a man who don't know how to ride a charger?" continued the *patron*, after a while.

"Yes; I's been thinking of dat; but dar's dat Timborello, he's a good horse what a man can 'pend on," replied William, as he scoured at the pan in a very wearing way.

"He's yours, William; and now all you have got to do is to win the girl."

After that William was as gay as a robin in the spring; and as I write this I suppose William is riding over the pass in the mountains, sitting on a board across his wagon, with his Mexican bride by his side, singing out between the puffs of his black pipe, "Go on, dar, you muchacos; specks we ever get to Bavicora dis yar gait?"

AS TOLD TO HIS GRACE.

BY WILLIAM McLENNAN.

IV.—"CACHE-CACHE."

M. GUILLOUX'S STORY.

DURING the early summer of 1786, M. Maurice Lenormant brought his bride home to his handsome hôtel in the rue Dauphine, near the corner of the rue de Bussy.

It was purely a love-match on both sides. In position and fortune they were nearly equal; their families had held high rank in Normandy for generations; both were young, and were united by common sympathies and aims.

But before another summer opened he bore her forth from the home in which they had so fondly planned their future; that had vanished now, and forever, leaving only her memory and her babe, Aline.

To the child M. Lenormant turned in his desolation with a tenderness and care which were unfailing, and as she grew older, every hour he could spare from his public duties was devoted to her.

She grew up a singularly attractive little thing, evidently inheriting much of the sturdy Norman blood, for she was strong-limbed and dark-haired, full of high spirits, and absolutely fearless.

When '89 brought the first outward sign of the New Era, Lenormant threw himself heart and soul into the cause of liberty, and his self-imposed duties increased as every month brought its unforeseen difficulties and complications. Heavy as

his actual duties were, they were rendered heavier by the constant thought of the lonely child in the empty house on the rue Dauphine. Yet he could not bear to send her away amongst comparative strangers, for the rare hours he could spend with her were his only rest and solace from his arduous labors. As for the child, she quickly accustomed herself to the gradual change, and, child like, found a new object round which her affection and life could centre. This was the *suisse*, as all porters in private houses were then called, a great strapping fellow from the family estate in Normandy, rejoicing in the name of Bazile, and in his manly proportions, set forth in the glory of a red and gold livery. Bazile was absolutely devoted to the child, and Lenormant had even more confidence in him than in Lizette, the *bonne*, and, as Aline was contented, pursued his work without anxiety for the care of his little one.

Lizette was kind, and her patience untiring, but then her stories of "*la poulette grise*" were not like those of Bazile. Hour after hour the dark-haired, bright-faced child sat in the lodge of "*her suisse*," listening to his wonderful stories, or learning his long *complaintes* of dead and gone kings and princesses and captains and fairies of far-off Normandy.

People passing or calling at the house were struck by the queer companionship. Many were amused, but others were horrified, among them Madame d'Averolles,