

LETTER IV.

NEW ORLEANS, January 28, 1867.

When proceeding on board the "Luppy Gull" on Saturday night at Natchez, we encountered one of the mule drovers, a young fellow from Illinois—a farmer's son—who was well up on mules and other cattle, and who had been "around some" generally. We had cultivated his acquaintance for the hearty good humour and intelligence with which he discussed things in the intervals of his attentions to the long-eared ones, and to his violin, for which latter he had quite a talent. He carried a rather pensive air, and the following colloquy, after the manner of *Æsopus*, took place :

Mr. G. How are the mules doing ?

Drover. One of 'em has just died—now lying dead on board.

G. Indeed, how did it happen ?

D. Well, the mule fell sick, and the owner of the lot alongside of mine came to me and asked me if I could do anything for a sick mule since he couldn't when I told him that I had a receipt that would cure it, but it had cost me twenty-seven dollars, and I couldn't afford to let him have the good of it for less than ten dollars.

G. And he wouldn't pay that amount, eh ?

D. No, hang him ! he was meaner than that, for I finally offered to use the remedy if he would pay the cost of the medicine, but he wouldn't even do that.

G. Was nothing attempted to relieve the animal ?

D. Yes, when it became very bad I got some oil and things to give, but it was too late ; and then when we came to turn it over, I found *my own brand on the critter*.