

## CHECKMATE

A Story of the Bull Ring  
In Mexico.

By AMY MINCHER PARISH

La Fiesta de San Juan was at its height. Guanajuato was turning out from its serpentine streets, close built and ill smelling, its hordes of humanity, from the family of the Gobernador, handsome, well dressed and modern, down to the swarms of beggars, with sightless eyes and deformed limbs, bearing in their bodies the mark of Mexico, with her dark past.

The whole movement was toward the Presa, the upper town, where the aristocratic element had by a natural law appropriated to itself the better air, prodigal in sunshine and flowers, clean water and fresh breezes, secure against the ever present dread of typhus.

Reservoirs supplying the city with water gave the location its name, and now, on the recurrence of his birthday, St. John, the apostle of healing waters, was to cleanse the city. The gates were to be opened and the presas were to empty their flood into the now nearly dry river bed, carrying with it in a mad rush to the Lagos the year's accumulation of disease and debris.

The wealth and ultra fashion were out in carriages. Laughing faces of dark eyed senoritas dividing the attention with the picturesque vendors of holiday dulces or sweets, impossible gyrating monsters, ear spitting whistles and rattling devil's boxes, wildcat little urchins who played cart wheel and leapfrog or did tricks for centavos.

But the crowning event was to be the annual bullfight, in which, instead of professional matadores, young caballeros, men of high social rank, were to contend for the honors bestowed by the fair hand of the queen of beauty.

Great preparations had been made for this special function, and long before the appointed hour the rose garlanded old amphitheater, where since the days of Cortes man and beast had met in an uninterrupted series of unequal combats, was filled to overflowing.

On one side rose tier upon tier of dark eyed senoritas, closely guarded by ever watchful sentries; on the other side young bloods (haciendados), with the tightest of trousers and broadest of sombreros, heavily loaded with gold and silver trappings, here, and there one in tailoring from the latest Parisian models, for everything French is undeniably dear and desirable to the Mexican heart.

While awaiting the arrival of the queen of the fiesta the audience centered its attention upon two men in their midst—Philip Carter, the energetic, elegant American, whose homage to the royal Isabella during his few weeks' sojourn in Guanajuato had already given him notoriety, and Senor Enrique Costello, a recognized suitor, even now "playing the bear" for her favor.

The presence of the latter, one of the best of their senoritas matadores, in the audience, signifying that he was to have no part in the fray, was causing evident comment among his friends. They could not know how the weary waiting for a signal from his love, the zealous devotion newly stimulated by a demon of jealousy born of Carter's evident favor with the girl, the very ardor of his passion had consumed his strength to such an extent that he knew better than to trust his future to a hand that trembled but in the presence of her he loved.

But the Senorita Isabella's royal beauty as she now sat enthroned in the midst of her maids of attendance, the lovely face with its brilliant eyes peeping from the meshes of exquisite lace, the hand wrought mantilla without which no queen of the bullfight is regally arrayed, lips ripe and red as the heart of a pomegranate, were fast arousing in him the desire to bring upon himself not the mere smile and victor's wreath, the applause of the audience, but a tribute to daring that should carry with it herself and her love.

What did she want of the love of a gringo?

Because she had lived in their country a few months did she know them with their heart of ice? Did she think her lover tropical enough to warm a home in the north into any semblance of her country?

He had felt so unloved, so wearied with the pacing to and fro in heat and cold, day and night, in front of her dwelling, walking where she walked, waiting where she rested and seeing the smile that belonged to him by every precedent of their race given to a big American, a gringo from over the line!

But jealousy, strong as death in Mexico, can also give strength.

Two bulls had already been slain, and the third had dangled from his shoulders six gayly decorated handkerchiefs, or sharpened goads. Furious and snorting, he was waiting to attack the red cloth, this time to his death, when a shout, lost in a roar of fear, sounded far up and down the city.

A man, placing his hands on the barrier dividing the audience from the arena, had as deliberately leaped over it to death as a schoolboy to play.

Snatching the red rag, he approached the maddened beast, who was pawing the ground, bellowing with pain and anger, gathering his fury for a final charge upon those who dared to so torture him.

The noise of the audience died into appalling silence as it recognized Don Enrique.

There was no time for conjecture as to the cause for his action. His fate

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would be decided in one moment of time.

When within two feet of his victim, Sir Toro closed his eyes in a murderous lunge, while the man from whom Enrique had taken the red cloth made a dash for safety behind the grating.

But there was hot blood in that son of the south, too, and the red flag of jealousy had flamed itself in his face, and the audience with wonder saw him skip to one side safe, and before the bull could recover from his disappointment leap from the side into the very embrace of death.

Two arms clasped the animal's throats like hands of steel. The astonished beast lunged and tossed in a vain endeavor to free himself. The goads bent and snapped, dropping one by one.

Then the dazed people woke to a realization of this bit of daring, and groans and hurrahs rose again and again from 15,000 throats as those two struggled in an encounter unheard of before in the history of bullfighting.

But never since the days of Ursus has jealousy or desire for revenge, nor love even, matched human arms with the strength of a bull, and Enrique's grasp must surely weaken.

To drop now was certain death beneath the angry hoofs which had pawed the ground so that man and beast were of the earth's color.

Then the young senor who, in the role of matador, was to have dispatched this bull, came to his work with a coolness hardly less notable than Enrique's daring, and braving the usual disgrace of attacking the bull when not charging approached the pawing animal, watched his chance and pointed the sword.

The bull, seeing a more feasible enemy, charged to his own death. For, opening the fingers so that the hit

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in the palm of his hand, Don Enrique so steadily it that the onward impetus of the animal forced the keen blade into the very arch of the aorta. One moment, as if daring even this, and over he fell.

Don Enrique gave a bound over the neck and, alighting on his feet, walked forward to the queen to receive the reward for his daring for her sake.

The crowd roared and howled and stamped in its excitement. Beautiful girls snatched off their silken shawls, their flowers; cigars, hats, canes and handkerchiefs by the thousands came in a shower into the arena.

But Enrique was all unheeding. He was looking for something more. Surely she knew he had done it for her sake! Did she think her American lover would have done as much?

But even as she placed the crown on his brow with hands that trembled and with eyes shy and beautiful he saw that she, too, had seen Carter rapidly threading his way to them between the benches.

"Querida mia," Enrique whispered as her eyes dropped to his. But he knew the sudden flush that dyed her face from throat to brow was not born of that endearment.

That evening old Don Jose, the landlord of the Hotel del Jardin, met Don Enrique coming from Philip Carter's apartments.

"No esta aqui," said the old man.

"He is not here. His American senorita and her father came for him this morning, and they have just taken themselves away on the train."

"The disappointed anger on Enrique's face did not lessen any."

"I have left a remembrance for him. When he returns, he will find it, and do you tell him Enrique Costello left it."

"Diablo!" said old Don Jose when he found Enrique's dagger driven to the hilt through the covers of Philip Carter's bed.

Two weeks later he received word from Carter to forward his traps to the office of the Mexican Central.

Possibly Carter considered that in Guanajuato there was nothing of sufficient interest for the American girl who was to be his wife.—Vogue.

## The End of the Beau.

Beau Nash, like Beau Brummel and Beau Brummel, was to expiate his contemptible vanity in an old age of obscurity, want and misery. As he grew old he grew insolent and seemed insensible to the pain he gave to others by his coarse repartees. He was no longer the gay, thoughtless, idly industrious creature he once was. The evening of his life grew cloudy, and nothing but poverty lay in the prospect before him. Abandoned by the great, whom he had so long served, he was obliged to fly to those of humbler stations for protection and began to need that charity which he had never refused to any and to learn that a life of gayety finds an inevitable end in misery and regret.

A new generation sprang up to which Nash was a stranger. His popularity gradually waned. Neglect filled him with bitterness, and he lost thereby the remainder of his popularity. His income now became very precarious, so that the corporation voted him an allowance of 10 guineas, to be paid him on the first Monday in each month. He long occupied a house known as Garrick's Head, subsequently occupied by Mrs. Delaney, but he died in a smaller one near by.—Nineteenth Century.

Alligators and Crocodiles.

Alligators, according to the late Professor Cope, belong to a much more modern genus than that of their cousins the crocodiles. No undoubtedly extinct species of alligator has ever been discovered by geologists, but those animals are fast being exterminated at the present day on account of the value of their hides. Alligators are found in China as well as in North America. The crocodile exists in Africa, southern Asia and northern Australia. The crocodile differs from the alligator in preferring salt water to fresh and in being more vicious in its disposition.

THE SMALL BOY'S TROUBLE.

Before they had arithmetic, or telephones, or chalk. Or blackboards, maps and copybooks—When they could only talk:

Before Columbus came to show The world grows grow!

What did they teach the little boys Who went to school, like me?

There wasn't any grammar then, They couldn't read or spell, For books were not invented yet—I think it was just as well.

There were not any rows of dates, Or laws, or wars, or kings, Or generals, or victories, Or any of those things.

There couldn't then be much to learn, There wasn't much to know, What fun it was to be a boy Five thousand years ago!

For history had not begun, The world was very new, And in the schools I don't see what The children had to do.

Now always there is more to learn—How history does grow! And every day they find new things They think we ought to know.

And if it must go on like this, I'm glad I live to-day, For boys ten thousand years from now Will have no time to play!—Answers.

## HER APPAREL.

"After all, you can't judge a man by his clothes."

"No, but you can form a pretty fair estimate of him by his wife's."

## HER FIRST FOOTBALL GAME.

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