

# Democrat

Bellefonte, Pa., September 25, 1903.

## THE SHADY SIDE OF FORTY.

On the shady side of forty, but the sun is sailing high,  
And the path is gently winding where the sweetest roses lie.  
On the shady side of forty, but amidst the golden glow  
I am walking with my loved ones where the fairest flowers grow.  
Youth is still beside me trudging down the incense-laden way  
And I fear not coming shadows of an evening cold and gray.  
For with light and love and laughter why should one be full of gloom  
On the shady side of forty while the roses are in bloom.  
On the shady side of forty, but yet scarcely past the noon,  
And the birds are gaily singing each its merry woodland tune.  
On the shady side of forty, but my pathway I pursue  
Full of hope and cheer and pleasure with the old friends tried and true.  
Love is keeping step beside me and the sky overhead is clear,  
And I take no thought of twilight and a night time dark and drear.  
For while loved ones cling about me why should I be full of dread  
On the shady side of forty with a bright sun overhead?  
On the shady side of forty, but my joys are all increased  
For I live again the hours when the sun was in the east.  
On the shady side of forty, and I live again the joy,  
In the memories, gay and happy, of the days when but a boy.  
Visions sweet come trooping past me as I walk along the way,  
And I live the happy morning, working in the close of day.  
With loved ones walking by me while the west is all aglow,  
I can pluck life's sweetest flowers in the gardens where they grow.  
On the shady side of forty? Nay, 'tis on the sunny side,  
For I see the sun in splendor down the sky-blue distance glide,  
While its golden tints are painting on the canvas of the west  
Pictures of a stately mansion where at last my soul shall rest.  
On the sunny side of forty! And the pathway leads along  
Flowered banks and rills that ripple in a never-ceasing song;  
And I walk with loved ones ever with a heart so light and gay  
On the sunny side of forty in the brightest of the day.

—Selected.

## HEPNER'S UNDISPUTED WILL.

"Old Man Hepner" was an original fellow, with a well-developed sense of humor. He seldom did anything as another would do it, but his method usually was effective, and it was more than an even chance that a discerning man would find a choice bit of humor concealed somewhere in his every action. Hepner could appreciate a joke as by himself. The average man wants companionship in his humor, but Hepner needed none. He did not have to repeat a joke or tell a story to some one else in order to enjoy the full flavor of it. It was enough for him that he saw the point, and in consequence he had developed a silent chuckle that was both mystifying and annoying. The corners of his mouth would begin to twitch, his eyes would twinkle merrily, and he would fairly shake with suppressed merriment, but when asked what amused him he would give the unsatisfactory reply, "Oh, I was just thinking."

It was fortunate for Old Man Hepner, as he was generally known, that he was thus constituted, for humor is essential to a proper enjoyment of life, and in his case there was little that was conducive to laughter in his immediate surroundings. He had accumulated money by hard work and economy, and he was decidedly averse to having it dissipated by lavish and unnecessary expenditures. Herein he differed from his second wife and his children. His first wife, who had shared in his early hardships and struggles, had been careful and saving, but his second wife regarded a wealthy husband as little else than a banker who should honor all drafts up to the limit of his resources. When this limit was reached it would be no more than considerate for him to die and permit her to acquire another banker by matrimonial purchase. But old men with young wives sometimes look at these things differently, and Hepner, with his usual forethought, would not let present pleasure blind him to future needs. He thought of his grandchildren, while his children thought of themselves. The latter joined with the stepmother in her efforts to make inroads on the fortune. They had not appreciated his early struggles, and their social and other ambitions were of the expensive kind. They were in need of money all the time.

Now Old Man Hepner was not miserly, but only reasonably economical and cautious. He knew how much he had, and he knew what would happen if he released his hold on the purse-strings—the fortune would melt away instead of slowly increasing as it was doing under his management. The income would be exhausted, and the principal attacked, in no time at all; his wife and his children would live high, and nothing would be left for the grandchildren; his money would be circulated lavishly in New York and Europe, and the place of their birth would know them no more. So he withstood the pleas and arguments, insisted that life should not be devoted entirely to pleasure, and retained his sanity and good-humor under the stress of constant criticism and ingenious verbal assaults only by his saving sense of humor.

"But wait till he dies," said the neighbors, to whom the facts were well known. "He can't take his money with him, and there will be great doings then."

"He'll tie it up in his will," a thoughtful one suggested.

"The will never was made that can't be broken when all the principal heirs are bent on it," was the confident reply.

As a matter of fact, this was the very thing that worried Old Man Hepner. The grandchildren almost invariably have an important place in the plans of old people, and Hepner was no exception to this rule. He wished to protect their interests, but how could he do it? He had, perhaps, an exaggerated idea of the ease with which wills could be broken, and he was fearful of what would happen when he had passed away.

"They'll make me out crazy," he said to himself. "They'll say I was unduly influenced by somebody, that I wasn't in

my right mind, that I had been erratic and irresponsible for several years; and, if they fail in that, the lawyer will forget to cross a 't' or to dot an 'i' and then it will be all up with the will. How can I make it binding?"

It was when he finally answered this question to his satisfaction that he gave his most extraordinary exhibition of suppressed mirth. In truth, he seemed in danger of an apoplectic stroke for a few minutes.

"What's the matter?" demanded his wife.

"I was just thinking," he replied.

"Of what?" she asked.

"Of my will," he answered.

"Is it so funny?" she inquired, puzzled.

"It is," he said.

His lawyer laughed, too, when he heard the plan, and thereafter Old Man Hepner chuckled more than ever. And always, when his wife or his children asked the occasion for his merriment, he answered, "I was thinking of my will." Naturally, they marveled much at this, and one day his daughter remarked that she could see nothing so exceedingly funny in a will.

"Wait till you see this one," he replied.

At another time, when his son happened to be at the house, he solemnly informed him that nothing short of cremation would prevent him from laughing aloud in his grave when the will was opened.

"Then you shall be cremated," said the son.

"As you will," replied Old Man Hepner.

"My spirit will still laugh."

This humor disturbed the wife and children mightily, for they could make nothing of it, and it continued fitfully up to the time of the old man's death. He passed away peacefully and seemingly content, a peculiar, quizzical smile haunting his face at the last.

His will, it was discovered, was in the possession of his lawyer, and it was with anxious curiosity that the widow, the son and the daughter assembled in the lawyer's office after the final obsequies to learn what Fate had in store for them. The lawyer smiled grimly as he produced a little box and a brief legal document.

"Mr. Hepner," he said, "these are the method of making his last will and testament, for there are, in fact, two of them, each decidedly original in form and contents."

"In any event," said the widow, decisively, "I get the widow's dower interest. Whatever may be done with the other property, I cannot be deprived of that."

"The first," said the lawyer, picking up the document, "is a rather informal statement of his wishes. Stripped of the legal preliminaries, it is to the following effect: 'It is my desire that my wife Louise Watts Hepner, my son Horace Hepner, and my daughter Helen Hepner Hoskins, shall have all rights conflicting with the purpose here set forth, and, by agreement, shall permit the estate to remain intact under the joint management of my attorney, Samuel Towner, and my former partner, John S. Fender, who shall give a sufficient bond for the proper execution of this trust; that the income of the estate, after deducting the necessary administration expenses, shall be divided equally among these three heirs, their heirs in case of death to receive their share, until my youngest grandchild shall reach the age of twenty-one years, when the estate shall be divided equally among all of my direct descendants then living, my widow, if still living, to receive an equal share with the others. If one or more of my three heirs, enumerated above, refuse to agree to this, I desire that my photograph shall be allowed to speak for itself, with megaphone attachment, in open court, and that the probate judge take such action in the premises as may be legal and proper.'"

The three heirs all spoke at once and all used the same words when the lawyer had finished reading.

"I don't agree," was what they said.

"Think of lying up my interest for nineteen or twenty years," added the son. "I want the ready money."

"So do I," said the daughter. "I've been planning a European trip for the last six years."

"And I must have my dower interest," asserted the widow. "I'm going to New York to live."

"In that case," remarked the lawyer in the tone of one who had slight interest in the matter, "it will be necessary to present the photograph will for probate."

"What is the photograph will?" asked the widow.

"It is a will that he dictated to the photographer in his own language," replied the lawyer. "I have the cylinder here, and, in case of disagreement, it will have to be used in accordance with the instructions he left. You see, he makes definite provisions for this substitution, so that if any attack is to be made it must be made on the photograph will. The other practically passes out of existence the moment it is assented to."

"Well," said the widow with determination, "I won't accept that written thing, and if the photograph will is no better I'll hire a lawyer and see if I can't break it."

"That's right," acquiesced the son. "I want my share of that estate without foolish restrictions."

"So do I," said the daughter.

"Again the lawyer bowed.

"You will know better what you wish to do," he remarked, "after you have heard the photograph will. Mr. Hepner was a very peculiar and original man with most extraordinary ideas, and he has prepared a will the like of which I think never was seen or heard before. It is so strange and unusual that, I confess, I am doubtful of its validity, but he seemed to care little for that so long as I could assure him that it would be heard in open court before any attack could be made on it. I will now let Mr. Hepner himself acquaint you with its terms."

The widow shuddered a little at this, and the son and daughter looked ill at ease. There was something uncanny in hearing the voice of Old Man Hepner himself explain what he wished done with his property. However, they waited patiently and in silence while the lawyer adjusted the cylinder. Then the voice they knew so well began this remarkable statement:

"I, Sylvanus Hepner, being of sound mind, declare this to be my last will and testament, and I desire that the absence of legal verbiage and ordinary legal forms shall be interpreted and executed in accordance with the plain statement I now make:

"I have no confidence in the ability or inclination of my wife, Louise Watts Hepner, my son Horace Hepner, or my daughter Helen Hepner Hoskins, to properly manage and conserve the estate—"

"The brute!" broke in the widow. "—and for that reason I desire that it shall remain intact, if this be a possible thing. Appreciating, however, that when Louise Watts proposed to me—"

"I never did!" cried the widow, indignantly, and then, addressing the photographer directly, "You know better than that, Sylvanus!"

"—she was principally attracted by the comfortable fortune I possessed—"

"A lie!" passionately exclaimed the widow.

"I anticipate that she will demand her dower rights. If she gains this much without restrictions it may prove an attraction to another man, and I am sufficiently well-disposed toward men in general to wish to preserve each and all of them from this fate. I would not willingly put in any man's way the temptation that may result in binding him to an ill-kept house—"

"Oh, oh, oh! I'm a good housekeeper, and you know it!" cried the widow.

"—but it may be that I am powerless. In that case, she must have her dower interest, the men must run their chances, and may the Lord have mercy on them!"

"Shut it off! Shut it off!" cried the widow, and when this was done she went on angrily, "Oh, the treacherous man! The cruel thing! That will never shall be produced."

"You have nothing to say about it," retorted the son. "Do you think I am going to let my money be tied up because some disagreeable things are said about you? That will must be produced in order to be broken so that we may all get what is coming to us. Let's hear the rest of it."

The lawyer moved the lever and the photographer continued:

"In case my wife elects to take her dower interest outright, and cannot be legally prevented from doing so, I desire that the rest of the estate shall remain intact, in accordance with the plan hereafter outlined. My daughter's share I would have preferred to leave direct to her, but I am averse to having it invested in yellow silk hosiery and green velvet gowns."

"Horrible!" interjected the daughter.

"—and from what I know of her taste this is what would happen. I have had no confidence in her judgment since she selected a husband, whose main ambition is to enjoy a pink satin existence on a calico salary—"

"He consented to the marriage!" cried the daughter.

"—but perhaps I should not judge her harshly in this. One cannot always get just what one wants—"

"I refused six before I accepted John, and you know it," expostulated the daughter, addressing the photographer.

"—and possibly she did as well as she could reasonably expect, in view of all the circumstances. Still, I hesitate to entrust the management of any considerable property to one who invested one hundred and fifty dollars in old bric-a-brac that was turned out of a Connecticut factory at a cost of about three dollars and twenty-eight cents."

"Stop it! Stop it!" cried the daughter.

"I never could hold my head again if the neighbors heard how I was cheated in that matter, just when I was going to be so swell."

"Go on," said the son. "What does it matter, so long as we get what's due us?"

"As for my seaplane," went on the photographer, at which the son winced a little, "it is better that the property should be held in trust than that he should fly to Paris with it. I know too well what would happen. He spent two months in New York shortly before his marriage—"

"Hold on!" cried the son.

"—and heretofore I have been considerate enough to say nothing of what it cost to get him back without a scandal. A young man who thinks a slight knowledge of stock-fancy will manage the old estate!"

"Quit! Quit!" commanded the son.

"—and whose only ability so far has been displayed in the direction of investments in colored shirts and patent-leather shoes is not one to be entrusted with the management of any part of an estate."

"I don't want to manage the old estate!" roared the son so angrily that the lawyer stopped the photograph.

"There is more," said the lawyer.

"I don't want to hear any more," returned the son.

"It has some reference to the three good-salaried positions that you have had and lost, and also to that little affair at the sea shore."

"Well, we'll stop right here," asserted the son.

"As I have said," went on the lawyer, "I have no doubt that you can break this will."

"But, to be broken, it will have to be produced," suggested the widow.

"It will have to speak for itself in court," said the lawyer.

"There is no way of avoiding it?"

"None, except by agreement in accordance with the terms of the statement I first read."

"And this cylinder?"

"Will be destroyed when the agreement is properly executed."

"Agree," said the widow, with a sigh.

"So do I," said the son.

"And I," said the daughter.

Then, suddenly, they looked at each other visibly startled, after which they all listened intently.

"It certainly sounded like a suppressed chuckle," said the son—By Elliott Flower, in *Cosmopolitan*.

## Two Ladies Flustered.

Two ladies entered the cable car in Edinburgh at an hour of the day when seats are a possibility. One was an elegant dowager in regal magnificence of attire; the other was evidently her daughter.

"Shall I pay the fare, mamma? I have my purse with me," said the young lady sweetly.

"Oh, no; I'll pay. I have plenty of change."

Thereupon she leaned sideways and commenced the intricate and hampered process of searching her rich draperies for her pocket. After a minute or two of fumbling, during which her face grew an apoplectic red, she exclaimed, tragically:

"Laura, what shall I do? I have been robbed. My purse is gone—my pocket is entirely empty."

"Perhaps, madam," said the gentleman by her side, into whose coat pocket she had thrust her hand—"perhaps if you search your own pocket instead of mine you will be more likely to find your purse."—*Scottish American*.

## Easy and Effective.

"Before I consent to let you have my daughter," said the square-jawed captain of industry, "I want you to answer a question. What would you do if I were to give you \$1,000,000?"

After the coroner had viewed the remains he decided that death was due to heart failure, caused by a sudden shock.

## Mark Antony's Plait.

He Carries the Mail, But Has Received no Pay. Under the name of Mark Antony Postmaster to the Post Office Department.

Mr. Harry Stillwell Edwards, who has gained some fame as a writer of negro dialect stories in the south, is the postmaster of Macon, Ga., and his reports to the officials of the department are of a highly interesting character. Instead of being written in the dry, prosy style affected by the majority of government officials, Mr. Edwards endeavors to add something to the nature of human interest to his reports, and in so doing has afforded much amusement to the Post Office Department officials in Washington. It appears that a few weeks ago a negro mail carrier named Marcus Anthony filed a complaint with Mr. Edwards to the effect that he had received no pay. It was Mr. Edwards' duty to make the matter known to the Department, which he did in the following "report," with the added information that Marcus would be forthcoming within a few weeks, but that this effusion was sent in order that the Department officials might know just what the condition was in Georgia:

## HIS TROUBLES.

He was black and deeply concerned. Both facts became evident as soon as he entered the office.

"Boss," he said, "kin I git satisfaction of de gov'ment fer dis?"

"Depends on de kind of satisfaction and de amount you want," said the Macon postmaster, amiably viewing his visitor's club with interest. "What's de trouble?"

"Well, I bin er carryin' de mail down yonder in Twigg county 'twixt Iram an' Bullards sense last June; goin' up an' down and shovin' an' pullin' er carryin' road three times er week, an' nobody ain' paid me nair nickel—not nair nickel. Huocum I'm har is I wanted know how 'bout it. Is I er workin' fer wages or is I er workin' fer nothin'?"

"Is I hired out to anybody or is I des natchally got er loos' job?"

"Who hired you?"

"De postmaster down at Irma gimme de job, an' he to me bin 'er bin all right when de boss man come erlong. But he ain't never come erlong yit, an' bit don't look all right ter me. Huocum I'm har is, I wanted know erbout it?"

"Did you take de oath?"

"No, sah, I ain't took no oath in my life. Ain't no man ever hear me swear."

"Er wrastlin' deacon in de Shoal Creek Church, er tresser er de Breedin' Doves of Israel. No, sah!"

"Did anybody go on your bond—anybody stand for you?"

"Yes, sah; Mr. Tom Bond down at de Sto' stan' fer me ter git er little meat an' bread."

"Did you sign a bond, I mean?"

"No, sah, I took de pen now an' den 'long in de book fer me 'one man an' ernuth er. Dey des gimme de yole leather sack three times er week an' tell me to hit de grit on dat sandy road. How many times a year, boss, does de gov'ment pay man git eroun'?"

"An' how in de name o' Gord is er nigger gonter live fun June tell Christmas on er sandy road less'n he get er victrola?"

"What can I do for you, old man—speak out!"

"Dat's what I'm er doin', boss. Huocum I'm har is des ter speak de Gord's tuff, I want you ter write er letter up to Gen'l Rosewell, de head man, an' 'splain de case right. Tell 'em Mark Antony Marcus is got de onesest job an' de po' est pay dey niggers an' line niggers. I'm 'er har in 'n' up an' down dat road fer de man what pays off de mail terter. Tell 'em fer Gord sake ter hurry dat man erlong! Hyar tis mos' Christmas an' no money yit. Tell 'em er some'n don't happen putty quick Marcus 'il be bleege ter hang up dat sack an' go ter splittin' rails. An' den what's de white folks gonter do fer dey letters an' dey newspapers an' dey seed? Yes, sah, dey's sho' gonter be troublesome times; 'cause de job done got er bad name, and when I drap hit deir ain' nair nigger in Twigg's 'ud totch it wid er forty-foot pole. Mr. Ed'wards, you know how 'tis erbout er nigger."

"He ain't got sense enuff ter ask de right question, an' when his coases ter 'splain,' do me 'er 'splain de worse hit gits. I ain't nuthin' but er country nigger, but hit do look like er I'm er workin' fer de riches' man what is I or ter git er word fum 'im 'bout dat money. Looks ter me like he done forget Mark Antony Marcus is er workin' fer 'im! Mr. Ed'wards, huocum I'm har is I want you ter write a letter to Mr. Rosewell an' tell 'im 'bout it! He done gone yonder an' turn dem Cubans loose an' plant er terbacker patch fer de las' one o' 'em; an' he done sot de Phillistines free an' gi' 'em er one horse farm all 'roun'! An' har is Marcus right by de back do' perishin' fum de face of de yearn an' er workin' up an' down dat sandy road wid his barfoot on de ground." His words so bad long in de summer, when folks was too lazy ter write an' de sack was empty, but bimbehy dey got ter sennin' out seed by de bushel, an' books what weigh nine poun's an' wid corners on 'em like er plov 'pint and den hit were sho' er 'sponsible job. Long in de summer, too, hit warn't so bad 'bout rations; water melons growed 'longside de road, an' plums an' blackberries was hangin' in reach; an' de squirrels 'ud shake down de muscadine at ev'ry branch but Lord! Lord! my foot's on de fros' now an' nuthin' in sight on dat road 'cep'n er stray rabbit what looks back over es sholder an' teks es foot in es lan' when he say 'good-bye. Mr. Ed'wards, I ain't gone back on Gen'l Rosewell nor de folks say; so me free; I'm still er totin' dat sack; but Gord knows hit looks mighty like dey done gone back on me! You write Gen'l Rosewell an' tell him—tell erbout Marcus; tell him Marcus is po'ly an' mightily pestered erbout de stomack. An' tell him mebbe he done forget dat Christmas is right hyar—right hyar!"—*Washington Evening Star*.

## The Hurricane in Jamaica.

About 90 Persons Killed—Banana Fields Almost Wholly Destroyed.

In a letter to George H. Bridgman, United States consul at Kingston, Jamaica, who is now in this country, T. Lawrence Roxburgh, the acting colonial secretary of Jamaica, tells of the conditions prevailing in the colony as a result of the hurricane which devastated one end of the island.

"The number of persons who lost their lives is not so far as has been ascertained, more than about ninety, and while the banana fields have been almost wholly destroyed, and very great damage has been occasioned to coconuts, pimento and certain other products which it will take several years to completely retrieve, arrangements are being made to enable parties who have suffered most who are temporarily without funds to restore their cultivations, while it is hoped that persons rendered homeless and destitute will be relieved out of the funds subscribed in the colony and abroad."

## The Pulque and Mescal of Mexico.

The American tourist journeying by rail over the plains of Apan, on his way to the city of Mexico, will be surprised to observe the vast plantations of the *magway* which stretch away on either side as far as the eye can reach. For fifty to one hundred miles, on the different railways, will be seen little else than these Agaves, in all stages of growth from the young plants newly set out—a couple of yards or more apart—to those of mammoth size which are seven or eight years old.

These immense plantations supply the Mexicans of the capital—and of other cities as well—with the drink known as *pulque* (pronounced *pull-key*) which is a national beverage. There are upward of a thousand shops in the city of Mexico where *pulque* is sold, and hardly a railway station, wide in a hundred miles of the city where the traveler will not be importuned to buy from the boys and women who bring it to the trains in pitchers and jugs of red pottery, dispensing it at a penny or two for a couple.

On the Mexican Railway, one of the systems connecting the capital with Vera Cruz, a special train is run over the line every morning, laden only with *pulque*, in barrels and skins, suggesting the milk trains of this country; and it is said that the daily shipments by this train amount to over one thousand dollars. So extensive is the industry that the *magway* plantations of the three states of Hidalgo, Tlaxcala, and Puebla are valued at nearly \$15,000,000, while the railways have carried over 80,000 tons of *pulque* in a single year.

Many species of the genus *Agave* produce *pulque*, these belonging to the *Americana* group of *Agaves*, though two species, *potatorum* and *salina*, are the most important, as I was informed by a Mexican botanical authority. The century plant, of our greenhouses, is a *magway*, and one has only to imagine a century plant, with massive leaves five or six feet in length, to know how these *pulque* *magways* look. They grow to perfection on the high plateau of central Mexico, where the elevation averages about 7,000 feet above the sea level.

When one of these plants reaches maturity its tendency is to flower, throwing up an immense mast or stalk sometimes 25 feet high, upon the branches of which, at the top, the blossoms appear. The *pulque* operator is always on the alert for indications of a blossom bud, and when it appears, he knows the proper time has come to secure the juices of the plant. To "castrate" the plant, as the operation is termed, a long incision is made in the heart, or central thickened portion, and the tender leaves of the unopened leaf-cluster are cut away. The opening thus produced is scraped and deepened until a cavity is made, into which the juices of the fully grown expanded leaves slowly filter.

This sweetish, slightly acid liquor is known as *aguamiel* (milk water), and in its fresh state might suggest the odor of root beer. It is removed morning and evening, and can be collected from a plant for a month or more, about four quarts being the average daily product. This goes on until the plant is exhausted and the leaves withered.

The liquor is collected by means of a long narrow-necked gourd, hollow of course, and with a small hole at each end. Placing one end in the filled cavity of the plant, and the other to his lips, the collector withdraws the air by inhalation, the *pulque* filling its place. Then, closing the upper hole with his finger, the gourd and contents are carried to a waiting mule nearby, and the liquor transferred to goatskins or other receptacles secured to the saddle. In this way he goes from plant to plant where the juices are exuding.

At the depot, or warehouse, the *pulque* is transferred to the reservoirs, which are often lined with oxhide, and a little sour pulque added to induce fermentation, the fermented liquor becoming cloudy, as though mingled with milk.

Having a wholesome fear of microbes, I did not feel equal to testing the virtues of *pulque* in any stage. The well-worn gourd with its mouth-hole, and the dark, greasy-looking goatskins, to say nothing of the general appearance of the ponies in charge of operations, I think would deter a man with even a stout stomach. It has been stated that the distinguishing characteristic of *pulque* is the odor of decaying meat, and that in order to lesson this unpleasant smell, orange and lemon peel are thrown into the receptacles while the fermentation is proceeding. Nevertheless, the beverage is universally used, and is considered healthful when taken in moderation, especially in regard to its action on the kidneys. But many *pulque* drinkers in Mexico do not use it in moderation, and in a certain stage of fermentation it is quite intoxicating.

The earliest use of *pulque* is said to date back to the latter half of the eleventh century, and to the reign of the eighth Toltec chief, Tezpozcoltin.

Quite a different liquor is *mescal*, although it is the product of a similar plant, but with narrow leaves, for the group of plants called *mescal* is *Agaves*. Some writers have stated that the *mescal* is distilled from *pulque*, but it is a mistake. The *mescal* distilleries are found in every portion of Mexico, but the best liquor comes from Tequila, in the state of Jalisco, west of Guadalajara, and is known as *Tequila* wine—or simply as "*Tequila*." It is a fearful intoxicant, although, aside from its fiery quality, its taste is not bad, faintly resembling Scotch whisky. The distilleries are for the most part primitive affairs, and, at Tequila especially, are interesting.

Tequila is a place of some 6,000 souls, located twenty miles from the railroad, and for miles in every direction around the city there are plantations of a particular form of *Agave* which sends forth its narrow leaves from a great bulb-like, cellular mass which forms the heart of the plant. This heart, when denuded of its stiff, sword-like leaves, and detached from the root, is cleft in two, and a dozen of these pieces make a fair load for a mule. Trains of mules or burros may be seen all day in the streets of Tequila transporting the *Agave* heads from the country to the distilleries.

The first operation that the raw product goes through is the baking or roasting. This is done in pits dug within the disillery inclosure. These are four or five feet deep, and considerably wide. A hot fire is built of mesquite wood large stones being distributed through the fuel. The cleft heads of the *mescal* plants are then heaped over the burning mass until a huge mound is formed. This is covered with grass, and finally with earth, and the mass left for several days to cook. When the mound is opened the raw product is found to have changed to a dull brown in color, and the juices have been converted into sugar. While hot and steaming the material is taken to another pit, stone-paved, on the bottom of which revolves a big stone crusher, driven from a sweep by mule power. Here it is ground into pulp, and the semi-liquid mass transferred in deep trays, borne upon the heads of Indians, to the vats, where it remains until fermented.

Then it goes to the still, and finally is run off as *mescal*.

The finished product is a colorless liquor, sometimes with a slight amber tint, though much of it is like alcohol. Some of the higher grades bear fancy names, such as "Crema-Sauza"—meaning the cream of production of the establishment controlled by the Sauza family—and such names become trade marks designating quality.

Another Mexican liquor, called *Zotol*, is produced in the more northerly portions of the country. It is likewise produced from the bulbous part of an *Agave*, a small species with extremely narrow leaves, like the true *Dasylirion</*