

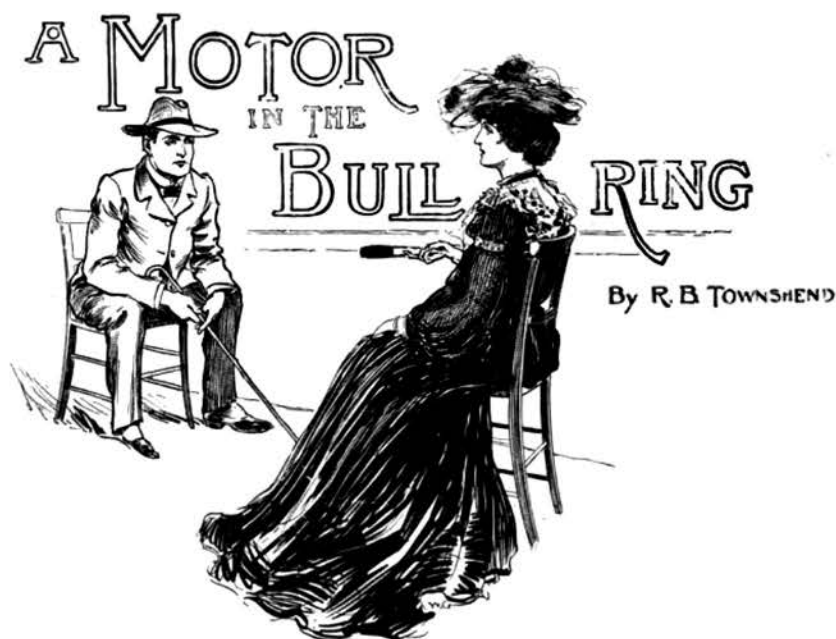
"Yes, that is not an improbable mystery, which would work up into a pretty story, and the post-mortem would reveal the facts."

"It is facts we have to deal with all the time. We must not hearsay or fancy, and it is always 'from information received' unless the prisoner is there. All the favour is shown on the side of the accused—a marked contrast to the state of things in France, where the *juges d'instruction* makes it his business to drag the very inside out of an accused man. They go further and hear everything. It is good enough evidence if 'a woman told me that a woman told her.' But there is no

room for romance in our system. It fits crime, for in that also there is no room for romance. We have no parrots trained to steal jewellery, and have not to trace the thief by the marks of a bill on a wooden match. I think there is no reason to complain because of that. We are as successful as most men, and crime is year by year going down in amount. I am afraid if it was all on the lines of the detective story it would be going up."

Whereat my friend departed the smoke-room to resume his duties, whether in or out of the New Central Offices it was no business of mine to ask.

W. E. GREY.



"**A**H, you do not like the sight?" said the marquesa, with a flash of her dark eyes. "You have no taste for our *toreros*."

There was a touch of supercilious coldness in her tone that stung the American. "It is the horses, marquesa," he said, briefly. "I can't stand that."

He was sitting in the marquesa's box in the bull-ring, envied of most men, for the marquesa was as difficult as she was beautiful, and her victims were more in number than those of the most celebrated *torero*. Perhaps it was a sort of fellow-feeling that made the beautiful woman so fond of her national sport. Perfect skill and perfect courage might win anything in the ring, and only such qualities could find favour in her eyes—and both in the bull-ring and in the marquesa's drawing-room it was *va victis!*

The visitor turned to face her with his

back to the plaza. Out there in the sunshine one of Spain's most distinguished *espadas*, with the red cloak in one hand and his long, straight sword in the other, was coolly luring a sullen bull to his death. The marquesa put up her fan as if to shut off a view of a part of the bull-ring where three horses were lying.

"Oh," she answered, indolently, "life is not long enough to let one dwell on the disagreeables. If you look for them," she shut her fan with a click, "you can find them in the house as well as out there—but why look for them?"

It was rumoured that the lady had learned philosophy during the life of the late lamented marquis, who had not been a model husband.

"But, my friend," she continued, "the skill and the courage of the man, can you not even admire them?"

"Oh, the men, of course," returned the American. "I'm not saying anything against

them. They're all right. Besides, it's their trade, anyway; and I will say they're real smart—quick as cats, and their nerve just splendid."

"Well," she took him up quickly, "what more would you have? What is there more admirable than address and courage? And where can we see it as in the bull-fight?"

A thrill passed through him at the proud challenge in her eyes.

"What would I have?" he answered, quickly. "I'd have them show their courage by something better than forcing blindfolded plugs only fit for the knacker on to a bull's horns. I'd have them come in on fancy cowponies and beat the bull at his own game of twisting and turning. That's worth doing, and I guess our Texas cowboys could do it, too."

"Ah, I knew you were right at heart," she smiled, with a look that for the first time seemed to admit him to the secret intimacy of her soul. "You should have been here when our King was crowned. Then the proudest nobles in Spain themselves rode their best steeds into the ring and met the bull with the lance in full career. Ah! that was a truly splendid sight!"

"Did they, by gum?" said the Transatlantic millionaire. "Wal, I'd have given a thousand dollars to see that. Wish I'd been here. Why, if I'd only known it was on I'd have hired Colonel Cody's best vaqueros to enter for the show and keep our end up."

"You would not then have ridden in the ring yourself?" she said, with a drop of her eyelids. "Before the King no one was allowed to ride but the nobility—no vaqueros could have entered. I suppose you great millionaires are the nobles of America?" she added, with a tinge of malice.

He flushed darkly. "No," he answered, "I'm no nobleman; we don't keep a nobility in my country. And I don't brag that I'd have ridden in the ring myself. I was raised in New York and didn't get much of a chance to ride when I was young. If I'd been raised a cowboy out in Texas, it would have been different with me. You see, I wasn't born rich, and I didn't inherit any millions. I had to rustle around and make them for myself, every solitary cent."

"It appears, then," she insinuated, "that in America the men who make the millions are too busy to be heroes, and so it is your cowboys who have the horsemanship and the—how do you call it?—nerve?"

"I guess in America a man without nerve don't gather many millions," he retorted.

"And if our city folks don't ride much they kin drive. It takes some nerve to drive a two-twenty trotter, and heaps more to drive a sixty horse-power motor. Nerve!" he laughed, scornfully. "There's more kinds of nerve than one, but they all mean that a man's got grit."

"Someone said you had a stable full of motors," she observed. "Do you, then, guide them yourself, or sit beside your chauffeur and let him steer the teuf-teuf?"

"Wal, that's as may be," he returned. "Sometimes one drives and sometimes the other. But if you ask me what I really like it's a sixty horse-power Panhard, a clear track, and a mile every fifty-five seconds. And I prefer my own hand on the steering-wheel every time."

He was interrupted by a roar of cheers from all round the ring. The gaily-harnessed mule-team had already dragged out the carcass of the bull whom the *espada* had duly dispatched and also those of the three horses who had fallen in the fray. Was it not Théophile Gautier who said of the steeds slain in the bull-ring, "They are not carcasses; they are corpses"?

Ringing cheers greeted the advent of a second bull, full of fire, who dashed round the ring like a tornado, sending the gold-bespangled *toreros* flying to the barrier.

"Ah, what a lively bull!" cried the lady, her eyes sparkling. "He moves like a whirlwind. Even your Texas cowboys might find it hard to evade his swift rush—that is, supposing they had the nerve to enter and challenge him." He met her eyes, as hard as steel and as bright, and found there a challenge to his nation. Was there a personal one to himself, too? A sudden inspiration darted through his mind.

"I can rack that little ten horse-power Daimler round and turn it on a blanket just as good as a cow-pony. And a golden key, they say, opens any gate in Spain, including even that of the *Toril*. B'gosh, I believe a thousand dollars wadded at the man who keeps the door will let me inside, and, once in, I guess I can find the nerve for the rest of the show. 'Twill take lightning steering, but I reckon I can show her a thing or two, if I am a New Yorker." He was watching the sharp rushes of the bull as the *toreros* called him and played him with their dexterous turns and twists. "Anyway, there's no great chance of my wheels skidding on that sandy surface, and I'll gamble I can do the quick turning and dodging as well as those fancy-dressed

fellers." He turned to the lady. "Marquesa," he said, aloud, "I've got to ask you to excuse me a few minutes. See you again soon. What's the pretty phrase you have? '*Hasta otra vista,*' and '*Beso sus manos.*'" And like a flash he was gone.

Five bulls had entered one after another the floor of that wide amphitheatre, round which rose to the sky row upon row of eager faces and bright costumes, and after their

innovation on the sacred traditions of the great national institution of Spain; while others yelled "*Olé! Bravo! viva!*" ("Well done, bravo, hurrah!") cheering the novelty of this entirely unexpected turn given to the performance. The puzzled *toreros* ran this way and that, for they were more taken aback than the bull. They were used to bulls, but not to a wild motor driven by a mad American. An enraged *banderillero*



"HIS HOOTER GAVE THREE LOUD, DERISIVE TOOTS."

brief madness of rage and desperate fighting had in turn sunk on the sand before the unerring thrust of the great *espada*.

But as the sixth and last bull bounded from the darkness of his pen into the bright arena and stood there a moment bewildered by the light, the circling crowd, and the cheering, a new thing happened. Another door was hastily half opened and then closed again, and through it in that half-second there darted in, not a gaily caparisoned *torero* on horseback, but a very small motor-car with a single occupant. The swiftly whirling wheels were so low, and the whole machine so tiny, that the man, who held a red flag in one hand and the guiding-wheel in the other, seemed almost as exposed as if he had been on a bicycle. As he rushed past the bull his hooter gave three loud, derisive toots, the motor swung swiftly round the centre of the arena, and then came back full speed straight at the astonished beast. A great clamour went up from the no less astonished audience, some shouting "*Fuera, fuera*" ("Out with him"), indignant at this most unheard-of

made a spurt for the car as if actually meaning to plant his barbed darts in the bold charioteer; but avoiding him by a rapid swerve the American left him behind as if he were standing still, and the yells and cheers of the audience changed in a moment into a burst of laughter. It tickled the spectators to see how the skill of the *torero*, trained solely to baffle the bull, had been as skillfully baffled in turn by the adroitness of the intruder. And now again the laughter ceased and the audience held their breath as the little motor, heading for the bull, speeded straight on to what seemed certain destruction. It came close, the red flag shot out at arm's length to the left, the bull charged blindly at the flag, and with the least possible swerve to the right the motor sped triumphantly past, and again swung round in swift obedience to the guiding hand of the American, now safe in the rear of the outmanœuvred bull.

Round the edge of the barrier were being held hasty and excited conferences of the *toreros*. Taken at a disadvantage like this they hardly knew what to do. The laws of

the Spanish bull-ring have come down from antiquity as sacred and as inviolable as those of cricket in England; doubtless there may indeed have been certain variations tolerated in bygone days, such as the use of bulldogs, nay, even of the lasso. But this dreadful intrusion of the motor-car was a thing utterly beyond precedent. What was to be done? It was all very well to say, "Arrest the intruder," but to run in between a motor going thirty miles an hour and a furious bull was like running in between the devil and the deep sea.

But while the *toreros* hesitated, the audience made up its mind. It had been used to seeing six bulls killed, in the regular fashion, once a week from time immemorial, and it had seen five so killed to-day. Now there was offered the novel chance of seeing an up-to-date motor demolished by a bull, and the audience rose to the occasion. Shouts of "*Bravo, motorero; bravo, motorero,*" rent the air. The childish pun in "*motorero*" caught their fancy, and their laughter was as loud as their cheers. The American *motorero* had succeeded in tickling the imagination of the people, and those ten thousand shouts spoke their decision in his

multitude of spectators, and steering for a moment with his left hand he took off his hat and bowed right and left. The cheers were redoubled, and he heard innumerable cries of "*Otra vez! que se repita!*" ("Encore, encore"), while the jesters of the audience encouraged his car with the Madrid cabman's cry of "*Arre, arre!*" ("Gee up!") Never before in his life had Mr. Elihu P. Hanks performed on the public stage, and the effect on him of these cries was curious. He suddenly was aware that he, by nature the most masterful, self-controlled, and independent of men, was rapidly becoming the mere slave of a crowd. He was conscious of an insane desire to obey—yes, to please them, to do any mortal thing they wanted. Individually he rather despised, or even disliked them—all but one; as a mass, they set alight in his heart a new fire—the love of applause; and he half-hated himself for feeling it.

Round swung the car till it once more headed straight for the bull and at its highest speed. The bull saw it coming, knew his enemy, and with a savage roar charged headlong forward to meet it. Swiftly the gap between them closed up, as the gap might



"THE AMERICAN GAVE HER FULL SPEED AGAIN, AND A DESPERATE RACE ENSUED."

favour. In Spain, above all places, it is a dangerous thing to thwart the fancy of the people, and the much and justly irritated authorities (authorities are always irritated by a change of programme) saw that the people must be allowed to have their way.

As the American swung his "*teuf-teuf*" round in a large circle on the far side of the arena he divined in a flash the new feeling towards him that had come over that great

close between two locomotives encountering on a single rail: but just before the crash came the motor-car slowed up, swerved, and curled away to the left. But the bull, not hampered this time by the flag in his face, turned almost as quickly, and in a moment was galloping right at the tail of the little car. The American, with one hasty glance over his shoulder, gave her full speed again, and a desperate race ensued. For fifty yards

there was nothing in it, and the bull, barely two feet behind, was furiously trying to gore the petrol tank at the rear. The little car was one of those for only two people, where both sit right in front. But inch by inch the car drew away and the American signaled his success by a volley of derisive toot-toot-toots on his hooter. Nearing the barrier the car swerved sharp to the right and the bull dashed past it and almost into a stately but startled municipal guard who, hesitating between his duty as a public official and his extreme disgust at this monstrous irregularity, had ventured inside the barrier. He was absolutely grazed by the unexpected swerve of the car, but a quick leap aside saved him by a hair's breadth, and springing to the barrier he went up it like a lamp-lighter, having had quite enough of the unwonted combination, while the bull, who had suddenly turned after him, roared with disappointed rage as he dashed his horns against the solid wood just below the fugitive.

At this same instant the bull was astonished to find himself spanked from behind with a flag. The American had turned instantly to succour, if need be, the hunted official, and, seeing him already safe, dashed past the bull's heels and flapped him as he went by. A round of cheers greeted the neatness of the trick, which the American acknowledged by another volley of toots; to the bull it seemed as if those toots were the challenge of a rival, and, forgetful of the municipal guard, he sped once more after the motor. For a moment it seemed as if he must catch the audacious *motorero* this time. The motor was running in a circular course close to the barrier, and the bull, who cut straight across and ran on the inner circle, had the advantage of a shorter track, an advantage which practically more than equalized their speeds. Now, now, he was all but up with the motor, which was, as it were, penned between the bull and the barrier, when lo! on went the brake hard, the car stopped within twice its length, the bull shot helplessly past, and the car glided gracefully out behind him into the middle of the arena. The *motorero* had scored again.

Then at last the American ventured to take his eyes from the ring and glance up at the box where he had been sitting half an hour before. The marquesa had risen and come forward and was leaning over the edge of the box. He had interested her. She would not hint again that American millionaires had no nerve. And yet was she pleased?

Was not that look upon her beautiful face one of mere expectancy, as if she were waiting for the real business to begin? Could it mean that she was unsatisfied because the final business of the *espada*, the death of the bull, was lacking? Did she expect him to produce a weapon and thrust home with it to win her favour? If so, he would be no *matador*—she might expect.

But while he thus debated in his own mind other people were active. The *espada* himself in particular was furious at this invasion, and his first wrath had fallen upon the unlucky wight at the gate, on whom he fixed the responsibility of having admitted the stranger and whom he trounced soundly therefor. Now, followed by his whole *cuadrilla*, he sprang into the ring, determined at once to stop the unseemly performance and to take ample vengeance for what he looked on as an insult to himself and his profession. But before he and his men could reach the middle of the arena there was a startling change. Hanks had started off after the bull again and had been waltzing round him in a sort of secure ecstasy. He had now found out exactly how near he could shave a collision without being caught; the car flickered this way and that under his sure touch on the steering-wheel, and the exhibition of his amazing dexterity brought cheer after cheer from the crowd. He had skilfully drawn the bull to the far side of the arena just below where the marquesa sat, and proud of his success glanced up at her once more. But just in front of him there stood one of the sweepers, those humble servants of the arena whose inglorious duty it is to rake smooth the sand and hide the gory traces left by the last victim. Theirs is no fancy gold and velvet costume; they win no plaudits from the excited crowd. They only sweep the floor. The man sprang aside to avoid the car, and in so doing put himself right in the path of the bull.

In a moment the unhappy victim was tossed high in the air, and as he fell the furious animal turned, to gore him through and through as he lay. Hanks heard the stricken man's cry of despair and, whirling his car, took in the situation in a flash. The *toreros*, as he perfectly well understood, had entered the arena after him and not after the bull, and in any case they were too far off to be of any use for a rescue. There was only one thing to be done and he did it. Without an instant's hesitation he headed the car full speed straight at the bull, and this time there was no swerving aside. He had

no sword, no lance in his hand ; but to save the life of the poor *chulo*, imperilled by the American's rash action, he would dare the uttermost. Right headlong into the bull he drove the car full smash, just as the

with the presence of the King of Terrors. Was he not claiming this rash foreigner as his own? One man shook his head, another shrugged his shoulders, as they skilfully raised the senseless form to bear it out of the



"RIGHT HEADLONG INTO THE BULL HE DROVE THE CAR."

terrible horns were within a yard of the prostrate sweeper. There was a terrific thud as they collided. The bull's legs were knocked clean from under him, and his great body crashed heavily down upon the car and its occupant. The farce had ended in a tragedy. The petrol from the burst tank caught fire and a great tongue of flame and smoke went up as from a holocaust.

The *toreros* darted to the spot, eager now not to punish, but to save. Some bore away the unconscious sweeper, others hastened to put the crippled but struggling bull out of his pain with the *puntilla* or dagger before they were able to drag out from under him and from under the burning wreck of the shattered car a piteous figure.

As they disengaged the stricken man with careful swiftness and raised him from the ground, his hanging head and nerveless limbs filled them with dismay. These men had spent their lives in the bull-ring and were familiar

ring. "It is possible," said one to the other ; "he is tough ; he still breathes ; by a miracle he may live. But I do not believe it. Look at his face" ; for indeed the ghastly pallor that overspread it was but too like the ashen hue of death.

The marquesa watching from her box saw it, and the ring of admiring young Madrileños who were gazing at her feared for a moment that her cheek grew paler.

Then she furled her fan languidly.

"I think, on the whole," she said, "that the old fashions please me best. They are more artistic."

Yet some people ventured to doubt the marquesa's artistic taste when, three months later, she petrified society by giving her hand to a bridegroom with a cork leg ; but the disappointed gallants finally consoled themselves by swearing that she did it for the honour of Spain, for no one could doubt that it needed more daring to marry a mad Americano than even to take a motor into the bull-ring.