

New York, and shipped here. We have provisions for the trip across the plains. Twelve large wagons and seventy-two mules, all arrived last week. Some one proposed the other day that we save the company the expense of employing mule-drivers, and guide the gentle creatures ourselves. Tom Eaton declared 'it would be romantic.' As we only needed twelve drivers, we cast lots for the dignified positions. Each driver selected his team, and to-day we are to have a trial in the manly art of mule-driving: come."

A moment's walk brought them to the wagons loaded with provisions and machinery upon the levee. The mules had been led from the yard near the hotel. The harness-boxes were soon opened, and the mules "hitched up." So confident had some of the party been relative to the skill and success they should display in this new enterprise, that a party of ladies were just malicious enough to conclude that rare sport was at hand, and so had gathered on horseback, in carriages, and on foot, to witness the experiment.

"Is it true, Mr. Fairleigh," inquired one of these, "that the gentlemen of your company intend driving mules across the plains? Has not Mr. Eaton been joking?"

"Certainly," replied Fairleigh; "it would be impossible for creatures so graceful, and withal bearing such excellent names as our mules, to be either perverse or malicious."

"What do you call them, tell us," exclaimed the maidens.

"Well, first is Camille."

"What a name for a mule," said one.

"Oh, Camille is a very good mule, a little wild, but cannot fail to draw well. She is the off-wheeler alongside of Jeff Davis."

"A capital epithet for a mule," suggested the fair critic; "as if mules were not sufficiently prone to rebel without being driven thereto, to sustain their good names."

"Then there is Jenny Lind, so named out of regard to the specially melodious qualities of her voice. We think her

trill and echo-song rather remarkable. And, finally, there are Chang and Eng, whose affection for each other is touching in the extreme."

The harnessing now began. More than half the mules gave instant signs that they were colts, totally unaccustomed to the disagreeable sensation of having leather upon their backs, and immediately began to kick, plunge, and roar. "Whoa," "look out," "stand still," vociferated the amateurs, whose unpleasant dilemma the professional drivers surveyed with malicious satisfaction. The amateurs were fast coming to grief. Dakin had ingeniously squeezed his body between two mules and a wagon-wheel, and was roaring lustily to be let out, as his ribs were breaking. Brooks had been kicked *hors du combat*, and Eaton lay groaning and disabled on a pile of coffee-sacks. Jenny Lind's heel, he declared, had set badly on his stomach.

"Whoa now,—help here a minute. Down with yer heels, 'whoa,' you jack-asses."

"Call them pet names, Harry, call them pet names," moaned Eaton from the coffee-sacks.

At length it was concluded to detail a corporal's guard of twelve of the soundest men to each refractory mule, as some of the mules, with all their game, were hardly larger than a good-sized goat. After a long struggle, to the infinite amusement of the spectators, and especially of the ladies and the professional muleteers, this disposition of forces attained the desired result. The mules were harnessed, and the drivers in the saddles. Eaton, partially recovered, limped to Jeff Davis, and Fairleigh helped him to mount. He cracked his whip, and, somewhat to his elation, the six-mule-team he was driving started simultaneously forward, and for a moment moved well. The cavalcade of spectators trooped along in company. As they approached the hotel, another audience of ladies greeted them from the balcony. Ambitious to guard against any disastrous collapse of speed in the midst of their