

The Two Mules

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Two mules were bearing on their backs,
One, oats; the other, silver of the tax.
The latter glorying in his load,
Marched proudly forward on the road;
And, from the jingle of his bell,
It was plain he liked his burden well.
But in a wild-wood glen
A band of robber men
Rushed forth on the twain.
Well with the silver pleased,
They by the bridle seized
The treasure-mule so vain.
Poor mule! in struggling to repel
His ruthless foes, he fell
Stabbed through; and with a bitter sighing,
He cried, "Is this the lot they promised me?
My humble friend from danger free,
While, weltering in my gore, I'm dying?"
"My friend," his fellow-mule replied,
"It is not well to have one's work too high.
If you had been a miller's drudge, as I,
You would not thus have died."