Pampered Pets of Patagonia

By Harve Loomis, '16

THERE must have been a reason for my choice of such a title, but I don't know what it was unless it just seemed to fit. We have a small variety of armadillo in this country which are called pichi and it may be that his get-along remindend us of one of them. I have been watching our supply of burlap bags very closely for he dearly loves to wash dishes with dry burlap. If the supply runs out he may yet have to resort to the use of soap and water as a cleansing agent. Well none of us are pets, nor are any of us pampered.

Horses? No. I have as good a riding horse as I ever used in old Paint. He is a dandy animal and I like him. There is nothing between him and me but a McClelland saddle which is not the kind of saddle I learned to ride on when I was a kid in Norman. But had you been with me this morning when I took him up a 6,000-foot mountain, you would agree, without hesitating that he is not a pet. Neither he, nor any other horse I have seen down here, is pampered. That lets the horses out. Sheep? Did you ever go on a mutton diet? Well I've been out here six weeks (as I remember it, one should be in a country three weeks to write a book about it, and since I've been here six weeks a short story is all that could be expected of me; if after six months I can write a letter home I'll be doing better than average) and we have had ram, lamb, mutton and ewe.

We did get a cabrito (kid) the other day and this is the way they cooked it. He was only about half grown and dressed out to about twenty pounds or a little more. Just the right size. I'm sorry I didn't get a picture of it. It would have been worth while. We put an iron rod down his backbone and set it in the ground at an angle of about forty five degrees almost over the open fire. A bottle of sauce Peachy had fixed up was handy. Don't tell me you have already guessed that we barbecued him. That's not what we call it here. It's an asado. Anyway he was fit to eat. I do hope though, that I'll be able to get a good T-bone with french fries before my teeth get too far gone to enjoy it. Speaking of teeth, though, when I pick mine I get wool out of them!

We do eat pretty well, though, and even if it is sheep, a good wine will make it taste okay. This is the only country I know of where they use a pipeline for the transportation of wine. But the sheep is not a pet; and that pretty well takes care of the domesticated animals I have seen here; so, on to the wild life!

Did you ever hear of a guanaco? Neither had I till I came down here. He seems to be a cross between a camel and an antelope. His markings and color closely resemble the prong-horn antelope but he has a long neck like the camel, as well as padded feet with two toes. He whinnies like a horse and all good guanacos are killed very early in their life. He is absolutely useless after attaining a few months age, but the very young ones have a fur (chulengo) which is quite desirable. I have never seen one of them in captivity so we will count them out so far as pets.

The pichi (armadillo) is useless except as food and as for me I still prefer mutton to him. We'll count him out too.

Ostriches? Have seen lots of them and we shot one the other day with a .22 and broke his leg and had a lot of trouble actually killing him. Finally made it, though, and all we saved of him was about three pounds of meat off his back. They say that's all that's fit to eat of him. They don't seem to tame too well, for I have never seen one of them in captivity so we will eliminate him too.

They do have a very special jackrabbit down here which is peculiar to this country. So much so in fact, that his specific name is Patagoniensis. Due to his peculiar markings he seems to be losing his drawers as he gets along over the country in a funny hopping lop. The natives here don't make pets of them either. There are no snakes this far south, though we have seen some old friends in...
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the lizard family. You may have seen the boomers we have in Oklahoma which get up on their hind legs and really make time when they get in a hurry. They are down here though not so highly colored as some I have seen in Oklahoma. One of them would not make much of a pet anyway, so why waste time on them? I have been looking for a horned toad but so far have not seen one.

Have not mentioned the children as yet. All I have seen on the pampas were quite dirty and so far as I have been able to see, most of them were given just a shirt which was not quite long enough, so we would at least not call them pampered. (Got rid of the kiddies in short order didn't I? Almost as short as the shirts.)

Flowers? Yes, they are pampered, and nearly every house has its flower garden, whether a vegetable garden or not. They have to be pampered to get them to grow at all. Just now nature is doing her utmost to make Patagonia beautiful. Everything which grows out of doors is trying to bloom. Some of them are succeeding too.

I saw a dandelion the other day nearly as big as a dime. It held its head high, nearly half an inch above the ground, like it was proud of its achievement. It should have been proud, too, to make that much headway in these winds.

Have you heard of the Patagonian winds? The way they measure the velocity of them here is to have an iron ball suspended, pendulum-wise, alongside a vane on which are graduations that are numbered like a protractor. The velocity is measured by the degrees from vertical this ball is held by the wind. The wind really blows here and always from the west. It is measured by the degrees from vertical this ball is held by the wind. The wind really blows here and always from the west. So that the dogs are worked only when they are working the sheep, three or four times a year. Their work is quite important at those times, though, and they are quite necessary on a ranch, or an estancia. This means that the dogs have most of the time as their own and are around the house to catch what bones and scraps of mutton are thrown away, and that's a lot. Few estancias I have seen had less than eight or ten of them around and all seemed to be well treated.

I suspect that you have guessed it, but isn't it tough that a pampered pet of the Patagonian pampas has to live a dog's life?

School finance plan proposed

Elmer Fraker, '20, '38 ma, superintendent of schools at Mangum and member of the policies committee of the Oklahoma Educational Association, made a proposal for solving the educational finance problem in Oklahoma which received considerable attention at the O.E.A. convention last month.

He proposed a constitutional amendment to eliminate general earmarking of tax revenues except for social security and pension benefits. The amendment would provide further that appropriations for common schools or state educational institutions would take precedence in payment over appropriations for other purposes.

In support of his plan, Mr. Fraker contended that "it is unnecessary to appropriate more money for schools than now is being done, but it is necessary for money to reach the general fund in amounts sufficient to insure payment of appropriations made for schools."