



The Llama.

The Californian Farmer recently published a letter from ex-Gov. Bigler, in which he gives the following description of Llama or Peruvian sheep:

The llama, alpaca and vicuña are not found in the country south of the desert of Attacama, which form the boundary line between Chile and Bolivia. The huanaco, the largest of the variety, is found in the Cordilleras south of the desert of Attacama, and there is value only for its flesh and skin, and for its wool. The skin, after having been so carefully tanned on the flesh side as to preserve the natural color of the hair, is used as a rug, and is placed in front of sofas in the parlors of the wealthy. In Chile, as before remarked, the huanaco is not valued for its wool, and is hunted like the deer and antelope in our own country, for its skin and flesh.

The llama is easily tamed, and costs but a trifle for the maintenance. In Peru and Bolivia, the male is used as a beast of burden, and is as useful to the people of the countries named as the camel is to travelers on the deserts of Arabia. (The female is not so used, and has young twice a year.) They will carry one hundred pounds over roads too dangerous for the mule or ass, making from fifteen to twenty miles per day. They are used for carrying silver from the mines of the countries named to La Paz, Lima, and the ports of the Pacific. The Indian drivers carry whips, but seldom have occasion to use them; so obedient are these animals to the voice of the driver. They never give trouble to the driver unless overladen, in which case, they will lie down and refuse to rise until relieved of part of their burden. They will perform the day's travel above stated, subsisting upon the moss and stunted herbage which grows so scantily along the rugged steps of the Andes.

Like the camel, the structure of the llama's stomach is such as to enable it to do without water for days, and even a week at a time. The hoof of the llama is spongy, armed with a claw or talon, which enables it to take secure hold, and renders shoeing unnecessary. In Peru and Bolivia, they travel in troops of five hundred and one thousand; and so regular are they in their steps and movements, as never to get into confusion or disorder. The load is laid upon the llama's back without girth or saddle, and, imbedded in the wool, rests securely even in ascending and descending the steep slopes of the Andes. "The motions of the head and neck, as they pass the mountain crags," says Lieut. Gibbons, "may be likened to those of the swan as it floats over smooth water."

Llamas are never put under cover at night, nor is it necessary, for they are very hardy, and can remain in the open air without suffering, even in the coldest temperature. They are very gentle, and if carefully watched over and handled tenderly, soon become very much attached to their driver or keeper. The llama has a heavy fleece of wool, which is highly prized by the Indians of Peru and Bolivia, and from which they manufacture a coarse cloth to protect them against the severity of the cold in the mountainous districts. The wool of the llama, it is true, is coarse and less valuable than that produced by the alpaca vicuña, but during a conversation which I recently had with Senor Melgar, the minister of foreign relations to the Republic of Peru, a gentleman well informed on the subject, he expressed the opinion that the wool of the llama would, in the mountainous districts of California, very soon change in fineness and value at least ten per cent. It has been said that the llama, when enraged, would spit, and that the saliva is poisonous, and will leave a mark on the skin wherever it touches. This, I am inclined to believe, is true as to the huanaco, but not as to the llama, the saliva of which is harmless.

The alpaca is the smallest of the four varieties of Peruvian sheep. Its body resembles the sheep, with the head and neck of the llama. The vicuña, although smaller in body, head and neck, may be said to differ none in form from the llama.

(From the American Agriculturist.)

Hints on Cabbage Growing.

A failure of this crop is common from the disease called "anbury," or "fingers and toes;" the roots swell, and after a time rot off; new roots are often sent out which keep the plant alive, and give hopes of success. But the disease soon reaches the new roots, and after a hard struggle the plant dies, or starts too late to make a good head. Fortunately, this most destructive disease generally shows itself by the time plants are large enough to set, and where the roots show the least tendency to swelling, the plant should be rejected at once. The grand remedy of the cabbage growers who supply our large vegetable markets is, never to plant the same piece of ground with this crop two years in succession. The cabbage is more sensitive than most other plants, to feeding upon its own decay. For this reason, unusual care should be taken in preparing hot-beds for starting plants, during this month. If the same soil have been used for starting plants the year before, it will be

very likely to impart the disease to the young plants. Very much depends upon the preparation of the seed bed, whether it be under glass or not. For late plants it is for the early to plant the seed in the bed to have either cold-frames, kept through the winter, or those started as early as March, in a gentle hot-bed. Whatever the amount of manure used, there should be at least six inches of fresh soil upon the top. Leaf mold from the woods mixed with sand or with yellow loam, makes a good seed bed in which to start the plants. The writer has always succeeded better with cabbage upon green sward broken the previous fall, than upon any other ground. In such a soil, we may use almost any quantity of stable manure with decided advantage to the plants. Hog manure is always to be avoided. I have never yet succeeded in composting it with so much muck as to make it entirely safe for this crop. Ashes are excellent, both as a manure and as a safeguard against insects. They should be used in the seed bed, and around the plants, soon after transplanting. —[JONATHAN.]

French Discovery in Sugar Making.

The French papers describe, in glowing terms, a discovery in sugar making lately brought before Parisians by M. Rosseau. The saccharine juice, when first extracted from plants, is colorless, but it has such an affinity for oxygen after leaving the cells of the plant that it very soon becomes dark in color and changed in character by exposure to the atmosphere. To prevent this chemical action—principally due to the albumine of the juice—the sulphate of lime, sulphur and various substances have been used. Rosseau's process consists in removing the albumine in the juice by mixing in a very small quantity of sulphate of lime with the juice immediately when extracted, heating it up to 212 deg. in a boiler, when the albumine rises to the surface, and is skimmed off. About 8 per cent. of hydrated protoxide of iron is now stirred in, and this, it is said, neutralizes all the changeable part of the juice, and leaves it colorless. The juice is now simply evaporated to obtain beautiful crystals, without the usual tedious and expensive operation of filtration through animal charcoal, etc.

THE BURNING OF THE WILLOWS.

A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION.

"This must be the house; the junction of the two roads and a break in front, the banks covered with willows. This place meets the description exactly. Order the men to dismount, with the exception of a couple patrols on each road.

The speaker was dressed in the blue and scarlet uniform of the British light horse, a corps that was formed after the landing of the English troops in New Jersey, as soon as horses could be obtained to mount the men. He was an officer of some rank, evidently, and his carriage and demeanor were both highly and aristocratic in the highest degree. And why not? He was the eldest son of a British Earl.

"The house appears to be deserted, Colonel Harcourt," said the junior officer, as he dismounted from his horse.

"We will see. This way half a dozen of you," he said to his men. "Try the door yonder. If it is fastened break it open, and report if any one is inside. If there should be, and they attempt to escape, shoot them down, but first give them warning to surrender."

The men advanced to the door, which they found to be fastened, and after demanding admission, to which they received no answer, they proceeded to break it open, which delayed them some time, for the door was a strong one. This done, they entered.

"Do you know the man by sight, lieutenant?" asked Colonel Harcourt, while the men were busy ransacking the house.

"No, sir, but there is a fellow I picked up on the road, now in the rear, who knows him well. He does not appear to owe him much favor."

"Order him to the front."

The countryman had not a very prepossessing countenance. There was a bold surliness and cruel expression of features extremely displeasing about him.

"What is your name?" said Col. Harcourt in his quick military manner.

"John Classen."

"Do you know Peter Van Dyke?"

"Very well."

"Is this his dwelling?"

"Yes—though since his mother's death and his sister's getting married, it is hard to say where he keeps himself."

"Does he bear the name of being a great rebel and being a dangerous man to those who favor the King in this neighborhood?"

"Yes, from the Passaic to the Hackensack and thirty miles around. If I'd had my way he'd been hung long ago, and his house burned over his head. He is the leader of every rebel gang from the army, and points out the honest farmers' homes who stand by their King, whose barns they plunder, and carry away their grain and cattle."

"Why, you tell a bitter tale about him. Has he ever injured you?"

"Injure! me? He and a parcel of robbers like himself came one afternoon to burn my house and hang me before my door, which they would have done but for the arrival of a few friendly neighbors, well armed, when they went off in double quick time."

"Does he not venture into New York sometimes in disguise?" inquired the Colonel.

"I have so heard," and can disguise himself very well. He is a precious scamp, and you will do a favor to this part of Jersey if you hang him as soon as you catch him."

This conversation had been held as near a stone wall, on one side of which was an old garden; but the troubles of the times had left it uncultivated—the gooseberry and currant bushes had grown up rank and untrimmed, while the briars stretched over the walls, covering the ground from sight.

Under this cover, and within ten feet of the Col. and Classen, lay crouched the very man of whom they were talking. He had barely time to escape from the house and conceal himself on the approach of the horsemen, whom he did not then expect to be within ten miles of him.

Twice, on hearing the base lies of Classen, he was on the point of rising up and confronting him; but a little reflection was left, and he thought that was not the occasion to place his life in jeopardy, which he certainly would do, since the party of troops had come expressly to take him.

"Do you know with any certainty, Classen, how long since Peter Van Dyke was in the neighborhood?"

"I heard that he was seen last night two miles from this, in a by-path through the woods, coming towards his house."

"This is the information I received, and I am determined to capture him sooner or later. If you can point out his whereabouts or arrest him yourself, you shall have a reward of fifty guineas."

Classen was as avaricious and fond of money as he was wicked. Fifty guineas was a large sum indeed when gold was rarely seen.

"I'll catch him, Colonel, before he is three days older. I know one of his haunts."

"Why not lead us there, then?"

"It would be of no use this time of day. Besides, he may not be there for a day or two, and I shall have to be cautious in looking for him."

"Well, secure him, and the fifty guineas shall be yours."

Several of the soldiers now came from the house, and stated that they had searched the house from top to bottom, but could find no one, although from appearances some one had been there lately.

The Colonel, followed by Classen, passed on to the house, while the fugitive lay in his concealment.

It was a plain frame house of middling size, built partly of stone, in the old Dutch style, and very comfortable within. There was but very little furniture—a few chairs, tables and cooking utensils. The better part, Classen said, had been taken away on the occasion of Van Dyke's sister's marriage, as her part.

"Here is a great coat, sir," said one of the soldiers, "that we found on the floor of the kitchen, near the back door. It must have been dropped by some one in a hurry."

"Feel if there are any papers in the pockets," said Col. Harcourt.

"Yes, sir, here is a bundle of them."

The Colonel took the package, looked at the superscription, broke the seal, and going to the window, commenced reading to himself with a countenance of surprise.

"So, so—here's a list of our troops and their numbers in and about the city. At Powle's Hook, three hundred and fifty. At Elizabethtown and Newark, one thousand. Gen. Clinton leaves for Charleston with five thousand. Why, these documents are indeed of importance. Who can play the spy so well in our camp? This Van Dyke is a most dangerous man to be abroad. Men, and you Classen, search every hole and see if any more papers can be found."

What he found or discovered he did not report to Col. Harcourt, but made the same reply as the soldiers that nothing of importance could be found.

"Very well, we will now leave the place and return to quarters at Powle's Hook. Hodgeson, place some dry wood in the middle of the room, and when I give the word, apply the match."

"What! are you going to burn the Willows, Colonel?"

"Yes, I will burn down the nest of this carion bird. It is well he is not within my reach—he should swing for it. One such fellow, with his secret spying, is of more injury to us than a regiment of rebels in an open field."

Little did the British commander imagine that the young man was almost within the very sound of his voice.

"To horses, men, all except Hodgeson."

By this time, with Classen, the Colonel had approached within the hearing of Van Dyke, when he halted with the troops.

"Now, Hodgeson, apply the match, mount and fall in."

It was with anguish that Van Dyke heard this order from his hiding place. The Willows, as the farm-house was called, had been the birthplace of his ancestors, as it was his own, and there he had passed his life. But what could he do? Nothing.

Presently a thick, black smoke arose, and burst from each door and window. This was followed by bright flames that shot far into the sky, and the crackling of the well-seasoned timbers, dry with a century of preparation, could be heard at a great distance.

"There will be one rebel shelter less to-night. It is a pity that they were not all burned down, then the king would have more friends on this side of the water. These rebels are like dogs—a good whipping makes them better natured. The house is nearly consumed, for the embers are beginning to

fly before the evening breeze. By fire to the right face, trot!" and the horsemen wheeled into the road.

"Fifty guineas you say, Colonel, if I take Van Dyke?" asked Classen again.

"Yes, fifty guineas."

"Then I will leave you here, and keep a watch around. He may return here before a great while. Where do you halt?"

"At the Oaks, five miles off, and stop for an hour or two for the forage party. If anything should occur within that time, you know where to find me."

The officer and troop rode away.

Classen lingered around and gradually approached the building, which was, with the exception of the brick walls, a heap of ruins.

"So, John Classen, you have glutted your vengeance upon me, and this is your work, viper and wretch."

Classen turned and beheld, within six feet of him, Van Dyke leaning on his musket.

"No, no, Peter," he muttered, trembling as he spoke. "It was the British officer. You know that I would not injure you."

"Speak not another word, liar, or I shall forget myself and blow your brains out. I heard all. You are to have fifty guineas for apprehending me. I am everything that is bad. I came to burn your house down, but fled when your friends approached! Wretch! it was I who saved your dwelling and your worthless carcass, and these ruins are my reward."

"Peter, dear Peter."

"Scoundrel, do not apply that word 'dear' to me. It sounds worse than the hiss of a snake. Listen, John Classen, the chief reason of your animosity to me is because Kate Wessels preferred my hand to yours. Thank God! she and her father are both safe from your persecution, for they are now within the American lines. Now, bear me—I spare you this time, for you are unarmed; but when we next meet, be it in town or village, forest or road, wedding or funeral, it is your life or mine. Go!"

Classen waited for no second bidding, but disappeared in the direction taken by the soldiers, in double quick time, his hair standing on end, for like all other great rogues, he was as cowardly as he was bad. Van Dyke paused a moment, and thus pondered in his own mind:

"That scoundrel will bring some of those horsemen back, for he will imagine that I will linger two or three hours around the old place. Yes, yes, I will after some twenty of our lads and prepare an ambush for them. Fifty guineas will draw Classen anywhere, coward that he is, especially when backed by the red-coats."

It was not long before Van Dyke returned with his party, whom he gathered by a signal and as night had fallen, they took their station amid the willows by the banks of the brook, where they could remain unperceived. For the space of an hour all was still, and then the distant tramp of horses on the road was heard.

"Here they come," said Van Dyke. "Each choose his man, but leave Classen to me—you know him by the cap he wears. I will give the word when to fire."

In a short time the party of horsemen rode up to the willows, and true enough they were red-coats, headed by a lieutenant, with Classen.

"Fire!" shouted Van Dyke.

So sudden and deadly was the aim that not more than half a dozen remained in their saddles, who wheeled their horses and fled as quick as possible. Van Dyke had intentionally aimed at the horse of Classen, and he fell with his rider. To secure Classen was the work of a moment.

"Now, lads, bring out the rope and throw it over that willow branch. We have alarmed the enemy and they will be down upon us."

"Mercy! mercy!" cried Classen.

All in vain. The noose was slipped over his head, they strung him up, and there he was left until he was a corpse. The burning of the "Willows," had been avenged.

A JOLLY JUDGE.—A Judge in Wisconsin, who had tried a suit for the recovery of a liquor bill, the defense to which was that the liquors sold were of a very inferior quality, charged the jury in the following sensible language:—

"Gentlemen of the jury: Pure, unadulterated liquor is a wholesome and pleasant beverage, and as far as the experience of the Court extends, conduces to health and longevity; but a bad article of liquor, or what is worse, a drugged article, gentlemen, cannot be tolerated; and if dealers from below, will send up in this country, so blessed with the smiles of a benignant Creator, such a miserable quality of liquor as the proof shows this to be, in this court, gentlemen of the jury, they cannot recover."

The verdict was of course for the defendant.

AMERICAN MISSIONARIES MURDERED.—The circumstances of the murder of two missionaries in China are told as follows in a private letter:

"Two American missionaries, Mr. Parker and Mr. Holmes, hearing that the rebels were likely to visit Yentac, buckled on their revolvers, mounted their horses and rode out thirty-five miles to meet them. They passed the outposts and got to the chief. They asked him his intention, questioned him as to his belief, explained a little Christianity, and were then cut to pieces by his people."