

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 sounded good to me. So far as I know there are very few pets in Patagonia and still fewer which even have an idea as to what pampered might be. I have written it and it has got to stay whether you like it or not.

But after all, pampered pets are not unknown in Patagonia, and that is saying a lot. Pampas, if you don't know, are the high, flat, gravel covered table lands of this country. Patagonia, if you don't know, is the southern part of Argentina. At present I am camped where the Rio Tarde comes out of the mountains on to a big flat which is mostly covered by Lago Posadas, which is just south of Lago Pueyrredon. (Better get a map and find it at Lat. 47° - 30' South.) Both of these lakes drain into the Pacific regardless of the fact that the boundary between Chili and Argentina is supposed to be the Continental Divide. But for that matter this whole country seems to be upside down and a great part of it is backwards.

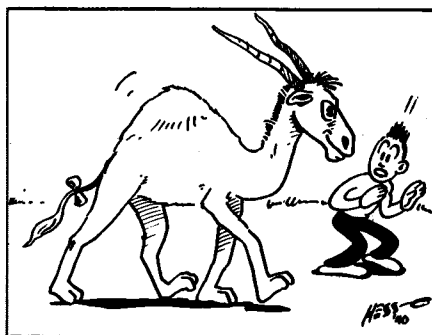
But getting on to the pets. Being a geologist I'll have to admit that neither a geologist nor his assistant (yes I have an assistant underfoot most of the time) are pets nor are they pampered. I, personally, have not heard of a pampered geologist since 1919. Neither of us being pampered, it is quite certain that we are not going to pamper any of our crew, which by the way, consists of two chauffeurs and a cook.

But mentioning the cook reminds me—I didn't like his name, Sanches, so we call him Peachy. Now don't ask me why. The name seemed to fit. We have a small va-

riety of armadillo in this country which are called *pichi* and it may be that his get-along reminded 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



"Like a cross between an antelope and a camel"

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 not as yet seen one in captivity here, 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 lope. The natives here don't make pets of them either.

There are no snakes this far south, though I have seen some old friends in

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Pampered Pets of Patagonia

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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, so that one really does not need a compass. All flower gardens are surrounded by fences of dead brush to act as wind-breaks. They are certainly pampered but they are not pets.

I was nearly bowled over this morning when the cook, Peachy, asked me if I would like a trout for breakfast. It was a speckled beauty one of the natives had brought in. About twenty-three inches long and still alive. It was a real breakfast. But you sportsmen get braced, for this is the approved method of catching trout in this part of the country: take a section of wire netting about six feet wide and ten feet long. Fasten a pole to either side of it. Find the small stream where the trout are running and fasten one of the poles to the ground at the bank of the small stream. Get the wire netting down on the bottom of the stream and wait for the trout to start past. As they get above the wire netting throw them out on the opposite bank by raising the pole which is not fastened down. It works, and some of the small streams are well supplied with fish. Their meat is not the same as the trout at home,

though. In fact I think I prefer the mutton. By the way, I have decided that it is not wool I pick from my teeth, but burlap.

Cats and dogs? Well I have seen very few cats and have paid little attention to them for I don't like them, especially the black ones. Most of the cats I have seen were being chased by dogs and that suited me, but you could hardly say they were pampered. The dogs are kept to help work the sheep. They seem to have work to do the same as the horses have. Speaking of horses reminds me that they have *gauchos* here instead of cowboys, and most people coming down here are anxious to see and meet a *gaucho* as soon as possible. The wife of one of the geologists here was of the same idea, and a few days after her arrival they were invited out to an *asado* (hope you have not forgot what it is) and as they arrived she saw what she just knew was a real *gaucho*, all dressed up, and she was really quite thrilled. Her husband, as husbands often do, then took all the joy out of it by mentioning as they approached him, that he was the only other American there!

But, back to the dogs. Sheep are raised here much the same as they are in Southwest Texas and are not herded all the time, 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?

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School finance plan proposed

Elmer Fraker, '20, '38ma, 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."

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