

proper age, and well fed, the cleft of the haunch is smooth and close, the meat small grained and rather mottled, the fat white and firm, and, from three to four years old, of full flavour. It is not a greasy but rather a juicy meat, and easily digested. The flesh of a full grown one is more nutritious than that of the yearling, although the latter is delicate and savoury, and would make an excellent ingredient for a pie.

In point of flavour, alpaca meat has, by good judges, been compared to North American venison, and even to our heath-fed mutton.*

symptoms of putrefaction. By means of congelation the Peruvians also prepare their favourite food, called *chumo*. This is done by putting peeled and sliced potatoes into a sack, which is immersed in water, and the vegetable there left for three days, when it is taken out, spread upon a dry surface, and exposed to the action of frost. It is then put away in the store-room, and, stewed with meat, forms a kind of permanent dish.

* As regards the flesh of the larger of the two wild species, I have it in my power to offer the following testimony from Mr Darwin, the talented naturalist who accompanied the late surveying expedition in the *Beagle*, round Cape Horn:—"I have much pleasure in answering, as far as lies in my power, your enquiries regarding the guanaco. The first I killed was at Port Desire, on the coast of Patagonia; it weighed, without blood, entrails, or lungs, 170 lbs. Another, shot a few days afterwards, was estimated at a greater weight. These, and during

The nature of pasture unquestionably affects both the quality and taste of meat. There is therefore every reason to expect that, fed upon our downs or heaths, the alpaca would yield a good and marketable flesh, thus increasing our supply of one of the necessary commodities of life. In this kind of stock the breeder would find another desideratum, and this is, the largest quantity of flesh on the least possible weight of bone. The quarters weigh from 35 to 45 lbs. In Peru this meat is not sold by the lb., but by the lump, and the price regulated by custom.*

the succeeding year many others, were served out on board H. M. ship *Beagle* as fresh meat, and were generally liked. The meat, as far as I can remember, was fine-grained, not very dark, (perhaps of about the same colour as mutton,) rather dry, but not with the least bad taste or smell. I do not, however, think it would be considered of a very fine flavour; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the meat was tried in no other way (as I believe) except being baked in a ten gun brig's stove, and that it was eaten very fresh. Moreover, these animals, shot in this wild state on the desert plains, were not fat. I cannot doubt that the guanaco, if domesticated and fattened, would yield a meat which, when well cooked, would be decidedly good, although possibly not equal to beef and mutton."

* At first the Spaniards made soap and candles of the

tain path with perfect safety, sometimes climbing the slippery crag in search of food, and at others instinctively seeking it on the heath, or in rocky dells shattered by the wintry storm; at the same time that, when descending, it habituates itself to the wet and dreary ranges on the lowlands, so long as it is not exposed to the intense rays of the sun.

This peculiar facility of accommodating themselves to different climates and situations, so remarkable in the tame varieties, we also know distinguishes the guanaco, which, as I have already had occasion to observe, has in the course of time spread to the southern limits. In a communication addressed to me by Mr Darwin, whose authority has previously been quoted, are the following remarks upon this subject:—

“ Perhaps there is no animal in the world which, in its wild state, flourishes under stations of such different, and indeed directly opposite characters, as the guanaco. I saw them on the hot deserts near Northern Chile, where the climate is excessively dry; on the borders of perpetual snow, at the height of 12,000 feet; and on the rocky and bare mountains of the

same country. They swarm in great herds on the most sterile plains of gravel, composing Patagonia. Formerly they were numerous on the grassy savannahs stretching on the banks of La Plata, where during half the year the summer is hot, and in the winter abundant rain falls; and lastly, the guanaco lives on the peat-covered mountains, and in the thick entangled forests of *Tierra del Fuego*, of which country the climate is far more humid and boisterous, and the summer less warm, than in any part of Great Britain. I could perceive no difference in the guanacos of these several regions. If the alpaca be the same species, or has the same constitution, as the guanaco, these facts regarding the range of the latter are interesting, as they show under what various conditions we might expect the alpaca to thrive. I will only add, that the guanaco so easily becomes tame, that young ones, caught and brought up at farm-houses, seldom leave them, although ranging at full liberty near their native plains."

During the reign of Philip II., at which period parcels of alpaca and vicuña wools were occasionally brought from Peru, and