

ney is seldom above fifteen miles a day ; but, then, they are sure-footed, descend precipices, and travel safely among the most craggy rocks, where even men can scarce accompany them. They commonly travel for five days together, and then they are obliged to rest, which they do of their own accord for two or three days before they resume their journey. They are much employed in carrying the riches dug out of the mines of Potosi. Bolivar affirms, that in his time about three hundred thousand of these animals were thus kept in actual employ.

The growth of the lama is very quick, and its life is but of short duration. This animal couples at three years of age, and remains strong and vigorous till twelve, after which it begins to decline, and becomes entirely useless at fifteen.* Their nature appears to be modelled on that of the Americans; they are gentle and phlegmatic, and do every thing with the greatest leisure and caution. When they stop on their journeys to rest, they bend their knees very cautiously, in order to lower their bodies without disordering their load ; and as soon as they hear their driver whistle, they rise up again with the same precaution, and proceed

* At Chili, according to Molina, they consider thirty years as the ordinary term of the life of a lama; and it is certain that these animals begin to propagate at the age of three years.