

recovered his horse from the dying robber, and rode home. For these feats of horsemanship two things are necessary: a most severe bit, like the Mameluke, the power of which, though seldom used, the horse knows full well; and large blunt spurs that can be applied either as a mere touch, or as an instrument of extreme pain. I conceive that with English spurs, the slightest touch of which pricks the skin, it would be impossible to break in a horse after the South American fashion.

At an estancia near Las Vacas large numbers of mares are weekly slaughtered for the sake of their hides, although worth only five paper dollars, or about half-a-crown apiece. It seems at first strange that it can answer to kill mares for such a trifle; but as it is thought ridiculous in this country ever to break in or ride a mare, they are of no value except for breeding. The only thing for which I ever saw mares used, was to tread out wheat from the ear; for which purpose they were driven round a circular inclosure, where the wheat-sheaves were strewed. The man employed for slaughtering the mares happened to be celebrated for his dexterity with the lazo. Standing at the distance of twelve yards from the mouth of the corral, he has laid a wager that he would catch by the legs every animal, without missing one, as it rushed past him. There was another man who said he would enter the corral on foot, catch a mare, fasten her front legs together, drive her out, throw her down, kill, skin, and stake the hide for drying (which latter is a tedious job); and he engaged that he would perform this whole operation on twenty-two animals in one day. Or he would kill and take the skin off fifty in the same time. This would have been a prodigious task, for it is considered a good day's work to skin and stake the hides of fifteen or sixteen animals.

November 26th.—I set out on my return in a direct line for Monte Video. Having heard of some giant's bones at a neighboring farmhouse on the Sarandis, a small stream entering the Rio Negro, I rode there accompanied by my host, and purchased for the value of eighteenpence the head