

The line of the track is strewn with the skeletons of mules and cattle which have perished on the journey. Very large numbers of cattle are constantly driven over the Pass, though it is 12,500 feet in height, from the Argentine Republic, and the Chilians, in exchange for this meat, supply corn to the Argentiners, which, however, of course goes round by sea.

The cattle can find little or no food on the journey over the Pass, and many die on the way; many others are obliged to be killed, and men occupying houses on the route buy the disabled ones, and make a profit by drying the meat.

At one spot an unfortunate mule had fallen from a zigzag path down a steep slope, and lay at the bottom with one of its legs broken, and the bone protruding for six inches. My guide went up and kicked the poor beast, which was lying down, till it got up on three legs, but only to see if it was of any good, and he laughed at it without the slightest feeling of compassion. I would have given a great deal to have been able to put it out of its misery, but I did not want the man to see that I had no pistol with me, and I was, therefore, obliged to let the animal lie.

There was absolutely no food, yet the man said the mule would live eight days. There were plenty of Condors wheeling about in different directions, but they took not the slightest notice of the beast. I was told that they never approach until an animal is actually dead. The drover who took the pack off the mule had, no doubt, never given a thought to taking the trouble to kill the animal.

There were several patches of snow which were crossed by the track close to the summit (*Cumbre*), but there was no snow on the track at the actual summit itself.

I was told that when highway murders were committed on the Pass, the traveller attacked was usually lassoed and dragged off his horse, and some way away from the track; the assailant, as soon as his man is noosed, putting spurs to his horse,—a very unpleasant mode of death. The lasso, however, is occasionally used on human beings with far different intent. I saw a young girl going out on foot to milk the cows, at a farm at some distance down the Pass, playfully lasso a young man with whom she had been flirting, catching him round the neck as neatly as possible, just as he was going away.

I rode a horse on the journey whilst my guide rode a mule. We made a *détour* on our return journey in order that I should see a remarkable chasm in the rock called "El salto del soldado" (The Soldier's Leap). We had to traverse an old and neglected route for some distance. In one place the hill-side had slipped somewhat, and the track was gone, but