

sour thick milk; this is exactly the Spanish butter. Sour thick milk covered by its own cream, is what they make their butter of—and sour thick milk with or without the cream, constitutes the material for their cheese. The Greek word, I am told, is said to mean a mixture of butter and cheese; and the Spanish butter is a mixture of butter and cheese, and their cheese, a mixture of cheese and butter. Be this as it may, a prejudice undoubtedly exists amongst the natives of Spain, and their American progeny, against the aliment of the dairy. Butter is never used in cooking or in sauces, and the physicians strictly prohibit in all cases of illness not only butter and cheese, but every sort of milk diet, and it is never recommended and often prohibited even in health.

It is at all events certain, that the dairy in Upper California is entirely neglected, and in consequence a source of great agricultural riches lost.

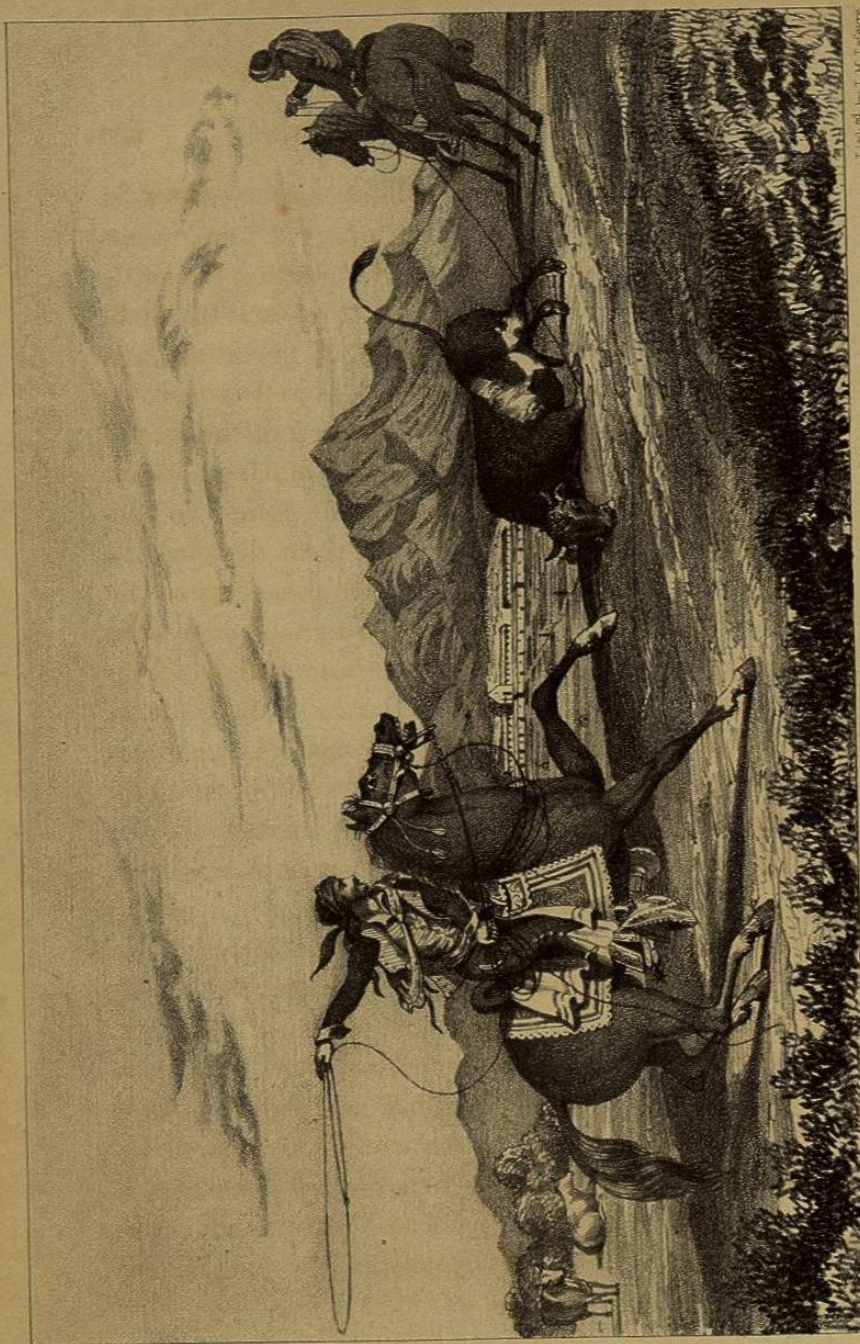
The supercargo of a British ship from India, bound for the coast of Mexico, informed me, that on making the coast of California they touched at the Russian settlement, called La Bodega, and which borders on the Spanish territory—or rather of right belongs to it, and although the part which the Russians possess is steril in comparison to the fine plains occupied by the Spaniards, yet they found immediately on their arrival a present sent on board

by the Russian Governor, of most excellent butter, cheese, fat mutton, and good vegetables; all things most desirable to people arriving from a long voyage. They soon after proceeded to Monterey, the capital of Spanish California, where they could find nothing but bull beef! Neither bread, butter, cheese, nor vegetables were to be procured. This was in the beginning of the year 1822; and immediately before the revolution; and I am assured by a Mexican officer lately arrived from Monterey, that the strangers who comprise a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of that town, are at this time (1834) actually furnished with butter and cheese from the Russian settlement of La Bodega.

The Spanish mode of managing cattle is in many other respects peculiarly their own; they leave their oxen uncastrated till they are three or four years old. The operation of castration they have no idea of performing on calves, so that in a large herd of cattle we find a great proportion of them are bulls, roaring and goading each other at a fearful rate. The greater part of the beef consumed in the city of Mexico is of bulls. It is no uncommon thing to see a drove of them without the admixture of a single ox, wending their way to the shambles of Mexico from the very remote parts of the Republic. Some estates on the shores of the Pacific were formerly accustomed to send a thou-

sand bulls at a time to the city of Mexico. This custom exists to the present time, but the *Haciendas* or estates having been much ruined by the revolutionary wars, the numbers are not now so great as formerly, but considerable droves at certain seasons of the year still pass on as heretofore. I never could find any reasonable motive alleged for this custom: the true one, doubtless, is their having inherited it from their forefathers; and I have no doubt it has descended to them uninterruptedly from the ancient Lusitanians; this custom is strictly preserved in California, and thousands and tens of thousands of bulls now roar, in all their native virtue and vigour, on its wide-extended plains.

Owing to this practice, and from the circumstance of the cattle being seldom folded, they are very shy, and in a half wild state, for which reason it is necessary in catching them to use the *Laso*. This has been so often described that it is perhaps unnecessary to do so here; yet it is so wonderfully managed by the South Americans, that it can never be seen practised without admiration; and, like a horse race, or fox chase, attracts every one within its reach to witness it. For although it is in general a useful and necessary occupation to secure the cattle in this way, yet it is by the lookers-on, and even by those engaged in it, considered as an amusement, and to which they are passionately



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CALIFORNIAN MODE OF CATCHING CATTLE.
WITH A DISTANT VIEW OF THE MISION OF ST. JOSEPH.

Drawn by Capt. Smyth, R. N.

attached. There is in all the cattle estates in Spanish America a time set apart, at certain seasons of the year, for the purpose of collecting the cattle in order to overlook and count them, and to brand the young ones with the mark of the estate, and perform certain other operations, as well as to accustom them to take the fold, and prevent them from running wild. This is called a *rodea* and is a holiday-time to all the inhabitants of the estate and its vicinity. Numbers come from great distances to assist gratuitously at the fête. On this occasion the cattle are driven into a large ring fold at a wide opening on one side: this is afterwards all closed up except a small door left for the cattle to be forced out at. Those that are to be operated upon are made to escape at this door singly; and when a bull finds himself in the open field, he makes off with the utmost speed, pursued by a space of horsemen swinging their lasos in the air; and while in full chase and when they get within point blank, those foremost throw their lasos, some round the horns, others round the neck; some entrap a hind leg, others a fore one: they then stop short their well-trained horses, and the bull falls as if shot, tumbling heels over head. In a moment he is secured by tying the lasos round his legs, and by some of the people lying down on his head. In this state the wildest bull lies perfectly motionless, and suffers

whatever operation has to be performed, almost without making an effort at resistance.

Although I have so often seen the feat of the *Laso*, I never was tired of looking on and wondering at the dexterity with which it is performed; nor could I ever comprehend exactly, by what art a man at full gallop could throw a noose so as to catch a bull by the hind leg while he was flying from his pursuers at all his speed. The noose must necessarily go under the foot, be drawn up, and run tight on the leg, which appears to be a slight of hand almost impossible. Early and constant practice can only enable one to acquire such dexterity; and, indeed, the practice of the *Lasores* begins from their earliest infancy. The first thing you see in a little urchin's hand is a laso of thread or twine with which he essays to ensnare his mother's kittens and chickens, and perhaps from those elemental essays the theory of the laso can only be comprehended: for the rapidity and magical-like effect with which the real laso is thrown, leaves no time or opportunity to see how it acts. It appears that to secure the hind leg, the large noose of the laso,—which, by swinging it round the head, is formed into a circle,—is thrown so as to pass under the leg at the very moment when this is elevated in making the spring, while the bull is galloping, and placed exactly where the leg must fall on coming to the ground: when the

laso is thus thrown, and the leg placed within the circle of its noose, the thrower instantly checks his horse, and gives his laso a jerk in the very instant of time when the bull's foot touches the ground, and thus draws the noose up and tight round the leg. All this must be done in a moment of time, and although it appears almost impracticable, yet I think this is the mode of operating. To catch the animal by the horns or neck is easily understood, and does not require so much skill; yet even to do this with certainty to a bull at full speed, and on a horse in chase, requires much practice and dexterity. The saddles used are well fitted to the exercise: they rise high before and behind, and have a knob on the fore part on which the riders can lay hold to secure themselves, and on which they can make fast or wind up the laso, the end of which however is not tied to this knob, but to a ring in the girth of the saddle. The horses are so taught as to lean over when checked, against the direction in which the bull draws, and thereby secure themselves from falling down under the sudden tug occasioned by the impetus of the animal when it is brought up by the laso. This, as well as the whole proceeding is admirably shown in Captain Smyth's drawing, from which the Plate is taken. The bridle used is equally well adapted to the purpose, being most powerful in its structure and calculated

for suddenly checking a horse. It is a single curb of a peculiar construction, having the bit doubled up high in the mouth without a joint; and instead of a curb chain, it has a solid ring of iron which passes through the upper part of the doubled-up bit within the mouth, and then passes behind the lower jaw, thus forming a most tremendous lever sufficient to break the horse's jaw if powerfully applied. The use of this makes the horse's mouth so sensible, and gives the rider such complete power over him, that he is checked at full speed in the most instantaneous manner. It is a common practice in some parts of Spanish America for the people in exercising their horses to ride up full speed at a wall, and when the horse's head is within a few inches of it to check them all at once: this masterly mode of management of their horses can alone enable them to use the laso with such dexterity as they do.

I have before said that little milk is used by the Spanish race in America, and when they do use it they have a very awkward way of taking it from the cow. They think it is absolutely necessary to use the calf to induce the cow to give her milk; for this reason, they first let the calf suck for some time alone, and then lay hold of one of the teats while the calf is still sucking the others, and so by a kind of stealth procure a portion only of the milk. They have no idea that a cow would

give milk at all if the calf was altogether taken away from her; so that when cows are kept for their milk, the calves must be kept along with them, and as they get the best share, a great number of cows and calves must be kept to produce a small quantity of milk.

It will be seen from the table given at page 266, that the number of sheep in all Upper California is only one hundred and fifty three thousand odd, which might be increased almost without limits; but as their wool is of a quality unfit for exportation, and mutton little used for food, there is no encouragement at present for any attention being paid to their propagation. The sheep in California as well as in all the other parts of Spanish America are of a bad breed, and their wool of the very coarsest quality: the whole seem to be exactly of the same kind. It is strange, that while in Spain the finest-wooled sheep in the world—the merinos—have so long existed, an inferior breed, producing the coarsest wool, should have been carried to their colonies. Perhaps the propagation of the merinos, like the grape, was discouraged or prohibited in the Americas, in order, as was the policy of the mother country, to give the monopoly to the flocks of Estremadura, as well as to the vineyards of Catalonia. It is extraordinary, however, that some one should not have introduced into any of those vast countries a

better breed, even in the time of the Spanish government; and still more extraordinary, that, since the revolutions which have removed all obstacles, no amelioration of this breed has taken place. There are large flocks of sheep in Chili; immense numbers on the table lands of Mexico which abundantly supply the capital with mutton; and myriads scattered over the middle or southern republics, all of which, as well as those of California, are of the same breed, and their wool invariably exceedingly coarse. It might be thought that in the tropical climates, the temperature and other circumstances may have changed the quality of the fleeces; but in Upper California the latitude nearly corresponds with that of Estremadura, and in some parts exactly so; yet the quality of the wool is equally bad there as in the equatorial latitudes of Peru and Columbia. The British settlements of New Holland and Van Dieman's Land correspond with the latitudes of Chili and California; and we see what a fine quality of wool is produced there, equalling that of Spain, and already forming an important article of exportation from those colonies.

It is impossible to conceive a country more adapted to the breeding of sheep than Upper California; and if a good kind were introduced by intelligent breeders the benefit would be incalculable. The same plan is followed with the sheep

as with the black cattle in respect to castration; and the flocks consist only of rams and ewes without any wethers, which are the most valuable stock. The mutton, like the beef, is therefore bad; droves of rams as well as bulls are seen daily entering the city of Mexico and other places of consumption all over the Spanish Americas.

Swine do not seem to be very much attended to in California, but in other parts of Mexico they are bred in great numbers. They are reared and fed chiefly for their lard, and are of a very good kind derived from the Chinese breed. They are fed in a manner so as to produce as much fat and as little flesh as possible. They are allowed to grow to a certain age in a lean state, subsisting chiefly on such roots and herbs as they can procure at large in the woods and fields, and when they arrive at the proper age and size for killing they are then shut up, or at least kept at home, and as much maize given them as they can eat; this being administered to them in moderate quantities, at a time, so as not to surfeit them. By this means they soon get enormously fat, and when slaughtered they are found to be almost all lard to the very bones. This lard they peel off as blubber is peeled off from a whale, the whole being entirely separated from every part of the flesh and entrails, leaving an astonishingly small proportion of flesh. They are often

so highly fed as to be unable to move. I have seen some unable to get farther up than on their haunches, just far enough to reach their food, and when satiated tumble down again and grunt themselves to sleep. In the sale and purchase of these animals their weight of flesh is never taken into account; the calculation is how many pounds of lard they will produce. Lard with all ranks is a necessary of life. Perhaps in the whole range of their cookery—which is sufficiently ample—no dish is done without hog's lard: from the *sopa* to the *frixoles* all have a large proportion of it in their composition; even their bread, to eat with the indispensable *Chocolate*, has its proportion of lard; and although they delight in seeing every dish swimming in this their favourite fat, yet butter in any dish, or used in any way as sauce, is abhorred as much by a Spanish American, as by an Englishman is the train oil of a Russian boor.

The following may be taken as about the average price of cattle in Upper California at the present time:—

Fat Ox.....	5 dollars..	£1	Mare.....	5 dollars..	£1
Cow.....	5 dollars..	1	Sheep.....	2 dollars..	0 8s
Horse (saddle) 10 dollars..	2		Mule.....	10 dollars..	2

CHAP. VII.

COMMERCE OF UPPER CALIFORNIA.—NAVIGATION.—REVENUES.

IN the time of the Spanish government, California had no foreign commerce; and as its almost insular situation cut it off from any frequent intercourse with Mexico by land, it was considered more in the light of a colony of that country than as an integral part: there was little or no commerce or communication carried on between them except by the transmission from San Blas of the annual supplies to the missions. The greatest impulse which the intercourse between Mexico and California ever had, was about the years 1792 and 1793 when a Spanish squadron was stationed at San Blas for the purpose of settling the dispute with England about Nootka Sound. This squadron on their passage between San Blas and Nootka, called at Monterey and other places in Upper California to take in provisions, wood and water; but on the retiring of the squadron the intercourse reverted to its former state, and continued so till the breaking out of the