

# THE PENNY MAGAZINE

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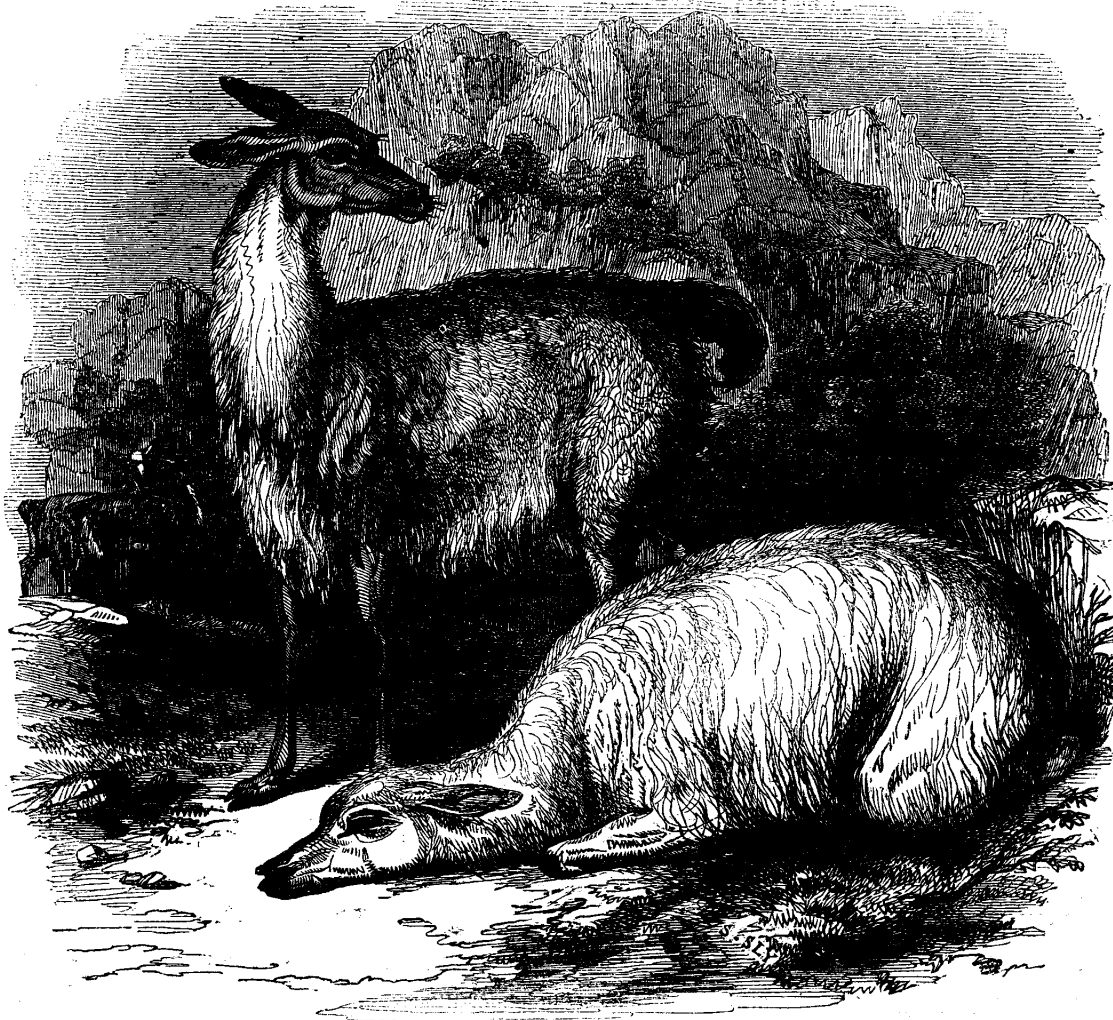
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## THE LLAMA AND ITS SILK WOOL.



[Llama. (Zoological Gardens.)]

THE genus *Auchenia*, which comprehends the llama and several allied species, is peculiar to the Cordilleras of Peru and Chili. The llamas may be regarded as the analogues of the camel and dromedary (genus *Camelus*, Linn.), being the American representatives of those animals, and approximating to them, if not in size, at least in structural conformation.\* In outward form (setting aside the hump of the camel), in the great cellular development of the second stomach, in the cellular apparatus of the paunch, and the absence or rudimentary condition of the third or plicated stomach, with the concomitant power of enduring thirst, or abstaining for a long season from water,—in the form of the large full overhung eye,—in the division and

mobility of the upper lip, the fissured nostrils, the slender neck and meagre limbs, together with the long woolly character of the clothing, the llama and the camel exhibit striking points of agreement. The foot of the camel however, with its broad elastic pad uniting the two toes except at their horn-covered tips, and expressly adapted for traversing the sands of the desert, differs in its modification from that of the llama, destined to inhabit the rough and rocky Cordilleras, along the craggy sides of which the animal proceeds fearlessly and securely. The foot of the llama consists of two slender springy toes completely divided, and provided at the end with a strong short hoof; these hoofs are pointed at the tip and hooked down somewhat like a claw; they are compressed laterally,—and the upper surface is in the form of an acute ridge, the under is linearly concave,—a form admirably fitted for a mountain climber. In each animal then, the foot is modified in accordance with their instincts and destined localities.

\* Linnæus and other naturalists of the last century referred these animals to the genus *Camelus*. Illiger separated them from the camels into a distinct genus, to which he gave the name of *Auchenia*, in allusion to the length of the neck, from the Greek word *αυχην*, neck.

According to the report of M. de Saint Vincent and Don Francisco de Theran, who paid considerable attention to the point, when in 1808 a small herd of these animals, sent to Cadiz, were placed under the care of the latter gentleman, the wool of the alpa-vicugna, a cross between the alpaca and vicugna, is longer and six times heavier than that of any other variety. The first object however is the naturalization of the animal, which we agree with Mr. Danson in thinking would be most advantageously attempted in Wales or Scotland,—this done, the rest will follow as a matter of course. Of the importance of the object little need be said—to every thinking mind it will be evident. We shall best learn how to appreciate it by reflecting upon the value of the sheep, with respect only to its fleece,—of the silkworm, with respect to the filmy envelope with which it surrounds itself, mummy-like, when about to undergo its metamorphoses. The products of the sheep and of the silkworm employ the labour of thousands in their conversion into various articles of clothing, useful and ornamental. In the manufacture of these products no trifling amount of capital is embarked, and from them originates a wide, a most important, and honourable branch of commerce, connected with our national interests and prosperity. That the fleecy produce of the llama will open a new field for the employment of capital and industry, and the encouragement of commercial enterprise, we have every reason confidently to anticipate.