

average of over £100 apiece, and in one of which a roan yearling heifer of pure Booth blood has fetched the remunerative figure of £750. At the moment when, in 1866, Mr. Lowe was thundering, in his anti-reform speeches, against the perils of democracy and the insecurity of property in Australia and the United States, one of the Melbourne journals quietly quoted the prices fetched at Maribyrnong by Mr. Fisher's thoroughbred mares and yearlings, and asked whether property was insecure or in jeopardy where such figures could be realized. When next Mr. Martin or Mr. Butt shall tell us that the value of Irish property is declining, it will be sufficient for Mr. Gladstone merely to point to these great sales of cattle in Meath and Donegal, and to inquire whether Fenianism or Nationalism can be making much headway in a country which can exhibit such figures as Mr. Thornton secured under the hammer, on the 23rd and 25th of August, for Mr. Barnes and Mr. Grove.

Nothing can be more desirable than the widest publicity for two Irish cattle sales, of which the prices have never been surpassed except in England, and which have rarely been surpassed even in England itself. Just as our thoroughbred horse-dealers exultingly point to Mr. Blenkiron's or her Majesty's average in 1866, so do men learned in the herd-book quote the historical sales of short-horns at which Mr. Bates' Duchesses, Mr. Booth's Great Commanders, Colonel Townley's Royal Butterflies, have realised fabulous figures. To show how rapid has been the rise in the value of short-horns, it will suffice to state that Mr. Bates died in 1850, and that his stock, sixty-eight in number, fetched an average of £67 per head. The principal purchaser at the Kirklevington sale was the late Lord Ducie, who himself died in 1853, when his herd of sixty-two head brought an average of £151 apiece. This high figure was principally due to the competition of our Transatlantic kinsmen, who have since astonished us by the magnificent sums at which they acquire "Duchess blood." But the two champion sales of high-born cattle in England took place in 1867 and during the present year. In 1867 the stock of Mr. Betts, at Preston Hall, in Kent, brought an average of £180 for sixty-three head; and, upon the death of Mr. Eastwood, his fifteen head of cattle fetched, in Lancashire, more than £181 apiece. It has, however, been reserved for an English nobleman and a Canadian millionaire to electrify us by the magnitude of the sums which they have not scrupled to give for the blood of Booth or of Bates. In 1870 Mr. Cochrane, of Montreal, gave to Captain Gunter, of Weatherby, no less than 2,500 guineas for a couple of Duchess heifers. The two precious animals were conveyed across the Atlantic waste of waters to Canada, where they gave birth to two heifer calves, which are destined in October next to find their way back again to the home of their

parents. During the past winter Lord Dunmore, who within the last three years has become the most spirited of our English stock raisers, sent an emissary to Canada and purchased the two Duchess calves for 2,500 guineas, or, in other words, at the same figure which in 1870 Mr. Cochrane had given for their dams. The good wishes of all who admire pluck will accompany these two horned beauties when they traverse the stormy Atlantic in October next. But we have said enough to show that Mr. Blenkiron, Sir Lydston Newman, and other breeders of horses, must look to their averages, unless they wish to be left behind in the race of prices by Booth bulls and Duchess heifers. Australia, the United States and Canada, no less than Great Britain and Ireland, are all entered for the competition race of short-horn acquisitiveness. Nor is it the least hopeful of auguries for our troubled and erratic sister island, that the animal product which of all countries Ireland is best qualified to raise is daily becoming a greater object of attraction in every corner of the civilized globe.—*London Telegraph.*

Canadian Sheep Breeding.

Twenty-five years ago the long and middle woolled—which may be classed under one name as the mutton breeds of sheep—were comparatively unknown in Canada. Nearly all the flocks of sheep then existing in the country were Merinoes and their grades, originally introduced from the Atlantic States. Our woollen manufacturers were then confined principally to coarse home-made cloths and flannels, then suitable to the requirements of a new country.

The South-Down, if I recollect rightly, was the first of the class of mutton breeds introduced, but as a pure breed, did not prove successful. This was partly owing to their want of hardiness; but mainly, we think, to the fact that nearly all the stock imported came from the same flock or strain of blood, and but little or no fresh blood being introduced from time to time, they were too closely bred, and lacked in stamina and constitution. The crossing of South-Down rams upon Merino ewes, however, proved advantageous, and many farmers laid the foundation of improvement in their flocks by buying and using such South-Down rams as were offered for sale by those who bred them. When the Leicesters came, a little later, they were at once taken into favour, and the improvement begun carried still further through them.

The first Leicesters imported were of the Bakewell type, small, compact, of fine form, with little offal, quick feeders, coming early to maturity; giving fine, well-flavoured meat, upon carcasses averaging 100 to 120 pounds each when dressed, at 12 to 18 months old. The success of the Leicesters, both as a pure breed and as an improver of the then ex-

isting flocks of short woolled sheep, proved so entire and signal that many of the better class of farmers sent to England for stock from time to time, and these importations being kept up, and coming from breeders at different points, whose stock, though pure, were not closely related, as was the case with the South-Downs, and the evils of too close breeding, being then understood, were avoided.

The Leicester blood thus became generally disseminated through the flocks of the better class of farmers, those who kept to the pure blood, keeping up the stamina of their flocks either by fresh importations or the exchanging of rams with those who had a different strain of the same breed from their own. The fleeces, however, of these Leicesters of the Bakewell type were objectionable in being too open, and rather inclined to be coarse and too brittle for a combing wool. The fault was not apparent in the sheep bred from a cross of Leicester rams upon the then existing flocks. So strongly did the Leicester blood tell upon these that the sheep of the third cross were nearly equal to the Leicesters as mutton sheep, with the advantage of carrying better fleeces.

As the fashion in England grew for larger sheep with better fleeces than Bakewell cared for, our breeders who imported from thence had larger and heavier rams sent out each succeeding year, till at the present day the short-legged, compact, fine boned, but coarse woolled Bakewell Leicester is rarely to be met with.

While the breed has gained in size, fleece and hardiness, it has lost somewhat in earliness of maturity, quickness of feeding, and, to a small extent, perhaps, in quality of meat.

At the present day it is rare to meet with a flock of Merinoes in Ontario; but among the poorer class of farmers a sort of conglomerated breed has sprung up, the result of crossing the cheap bought, rejected cull rams of the Leicester breeders, upon the remains of the old Merino flocks sold cheap or given away by the better class of farmers to make room for the mutton breeds. These sheep, kept by the present owners as near to the starving point in winter as will just keep life in them, are as yet far too common, and being generally turned out in summer to wander about the country roads in search of grass, are apt to give a stranger travelling over them, a bad opinion of our sheep husbandry.

These sheep have all the bad points of the Merino, with but little compensating qualities derived from the Leicester cross; and being, after the first cross, generally bred in and in, and the best sold to the butchers, make about as worthless a class of sheep as one can see anywhere, giving inferior fleeces of 2½ to 5 pounds, on carcasses of 60 to 100 pounds, the weight depending upon the