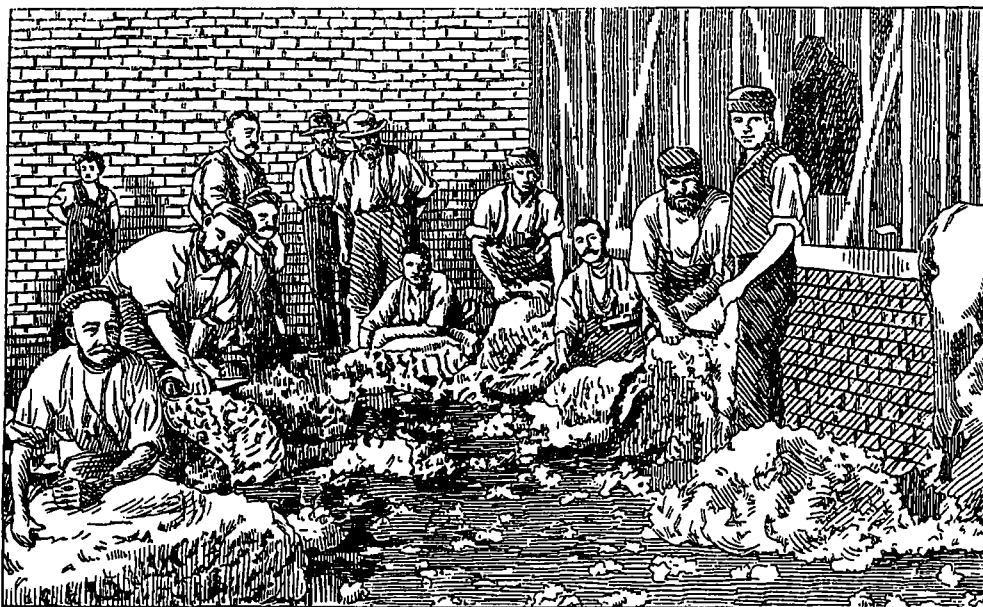


cellence in feeding qualities, its breeding qualities, its bone, and its all-round stamina are not equal to those of its ancestors half a century ago. The bugler of the vast army of improvers of live stock, therefore, should blow a loud blast that will call a halt in some of the methods practiced by breeders of pure-breds the world over. Two or three leaves they must tear out of the book of past practices and they must begin again. One of these is the leaf of in-and-in breeding, a second is the leaf of selection, and a third is the leaf of environment.

Take first the leaf of in-and-in breeding and give it a savage tear. True, in-and-in breeding may

flocks were the most radiant, and at length there came a time, and usually in the life of the improver, when the average of the herd or flock was something less than in the former years. Is that not true even of the famous Sittyton herd of Shorthorns, which was less inbred than the herds of other renowned and earlier improvers?

Take next the leaf of selection. Cut it out and supply it with another. In the past, selection based upon performance in the ancestry for several generations back has been given first place in the creed of all improvers. It should not be so unless accompanied by strong evidence of vigorous performance



Sheep Shearing

be used as a short cut to improvement when breeds are being evolved. It may be given a place temporarily now and then in the practice of wise breeders, but the average breeder of pure-breds has no business to tamper with it. Its effects when long continued are only baneful with both animals and men. Take the lordly high-caste families of Shorthorns, for instance, that were so much in demand fifty years ago. Where are they now? They have been pushed almost entirely out of the show-rings. They lie in scores in graves dug by tuberculosis. They live mainly in the flickering, waning glory of a departed past. By in-and-in breeding men quickly brought their herds and flocks to the front, but let it be noticed the early periods in the history of such herds and

in the ancestry given in the animal selected. No matter what the performance of the ancestry has been if the individual is a weakling. And that performance may have helped to make it so, as, for instance, when it has come by direct descent from a short and brilliant line of prize-winners whose stamina has been consumed by unnatural forcing in food and environment of a character calculated to weaken. In selection, therefore, place stamina first and not last. Do not be dazzled by the brilliant record of a near ancestry that has helped to make a weakling of the progeny. I would not be misunderstood. I am not urging that performance in the ancestry is to be ignored. It is of great account, but only when accompanied by individual vigor in the progeny. Of what avail