KEEP MORE SHEEP.

There are two strong reasons, among many others, which make it profitable for the farmer to keep sheep. Of all the live stock kept on the farm, sheep stand out above all others as renovators of the soil. Sheep will eat a greater variety of plants than cattle or horses, and consequently many kinds of noxious weeds are eaten off and made to produce wool and mutton instead of ripened seed which falls to the ground to come up the following year and displace the grasses and growing crops. For this reason alone, if for no other, every farmer on a hundred-acre farm should keep at least a dozen sheep.

In addition to the good qualities of sheep as renovators of the soil, they help to maintain and increase the fertility of the farm. They are especially beneficial in this regard on hilly farms. If the pasture land is hilly sheep at night usually get on the hilly parts of the field, the portions most in need of manure, and their droppings help to increase the fertility very much. In other respects sheep are valuable on every farm as a means of increasing the fertility of the land.

There is one point that every farmer who keeps sheep should bear in mind, and that is, that a really first-class sheep will make as good a renovator of the soil as a poor, miserable animal that is neither a good wool producer nor a breeder of the kind of lambs that will command the highest prices on the market. As much care should be exercised in selecting sheep for the farm as any other animal. Quality counts in this as well as in any other line. The farmer who intends to keep sheep should select the breed that will give the greatest return in wool and lamb production.

In regard to the wool produced in this country, it may be well to point out just here that Canadian wool has the reputation of being of that coarse variety which seems to be a drug upon the markets of the world at the present time. A reaction may take place sooner or later, and this class of wools may be in greater demand, but it is somewhat doubtful, if the present tendency of the market be taken as a guide. The demand for the finer wools is increasing the world over. The market for these is not subject to the variations in price that obtain in the market for the coarser wools, for the reason that the finer wools go to form materials that are bought by the rich, who do not quibble so much about the price. It may be well, therefore, for the farmer, when procuring a flock of sheep, to select those breeds which are producers of the finer wools.

EMBARRASSMENT TO VESSELS.

The recent decision of the United States Treasury Department that the rule of the coasting trade should be applied to commerce with Porto Rico is already causing embarrassment to vessels which have been accustomed to go there. Several cases have been laid before the Bureau of Navigation, where passengers had made arrangements to go by foreign vessels, and would be subjected to great hardship by the refusal of permission to make the journey. Assistant Secretary Howell has made exceptions in two or three of these cases, but does not propose to do so in the future, nor to relax the severity of the general rule that passengers and merchandise can be carried between Porto Rico and other parts of the United States in American vessels only. One of the cases in which an exception was made was that of an American line which had temporarily employed some foreign vessels because its own vessels had been taken by the Government for transports and other purposes.

The view that Porto Rico is substantially a part of the United States, and that commerce between the island and the main land is subject to the rule of the coasting trade will be enforced until there is different legislation by Congress. President McKinley decided upon this policy under his authority as military chieftain, but it will lie with Congress to determine the permanent policy of the United States towards the island. The rule of the coasting trade, which is being enforced, with regard to traffic with the United States, will not interfere with the foreign trade of Porto Rico, except in the incidental manner in which foreign trade with the island may have been promoted by the ability of vessels bringing freight from Europe, to take on goods at an American port for Porto Rico, or to carry goods from Porto Rico to the ports of the old Union. Such privileges are now abolished by the rule, which is being enforced by the Treasury Department under the orders of the President.

LABOR'S SHARE OF THE COST OF PRODUCTION.

The report recently made to the Massachusetts legislature by the committee appointed to investigate labor conditions in that state contains much information of iterest to students of industrial affairs. It has been generally believed that "native" labor is most largely represented in the New England mills, but this is apparently not the case. Taking Fall River as a typical cotton manufacturing town, the report referred to shows that 89 per cent. of the employees are French-Canadians, English and Irish, in the proportions of 39, 37 and 13 per cent. respectively. Another fact of interest is the large percentage of the gross receipts paid to labor. We take pride in being a labor-saving nation and we claim that while wages are comparatively high in America the labor cost for a given product is comparatively low, owing to labor-saving machinery; but the following table, giving the ratio of expenses to gross receipts of a very large cotton mill in New England, shows that labor is, next to raw material, much the largest item:

Labor	.2795
Salaries	.0072
Taxes	.0175
Interest	.0184
Commission (selling)	.0190
Repairs and improvements	.0284
Bleaching and finishing	.0635
Insurance	.0023
Coal	.0169
Supplies, etc	.0378
Cotton	.4443
Dividends	.0652
Total	1.0000

The total annual expenditures of the mill to the operations of which the foregoing figures relate approximate $3,000,000. It appears that the dividend is less than one-fourth the amount paid for labor and there is no reason to suppose that this difference is unusually large. In fact, any cotton mill in New England that has been enabled to declare 6½ per cent dividends in recent years must have been foremost in the list of those which adopted labor-saving appliances. It would not be difficult to name many large industries in which the ratio of labor cost to gross expenses is much larger, often exceeding 50 per cent. of the whole. Competition has cut prices on almost all staple manufactures to such a degree that capital can not earn much more than legal interest, and often earns far less.

The paying businesses of the present day are based either upon enormous outputs, with low prices, or upon monopolies or secret processes covered by patents, with high prices. The struggle to prevent infringements and to preserve secrets inviolate is a constant effort and anxiety to the proprietors of such protected industries, while in the large factories competing with each other in making staple articles an unexpected loss of a hundredth of one cent on a pound or a yard or a gallon of the goods produced may cause a loss of all profit, or in some cases even bankruptcy. The necessity of keeping such close accounts complicates the clerical work and adds greatly to the difficulties of management.

Labor is entirely free from all such anxieties, and not only gains the largest share of the manufacturing expenses but profits by the increased purchasing power due to lower prices of all competitive commodities produced by labor-saving machinery. From this point of view, then, labor in this country is highly favored and does not suffer from the constant concentration of manufacture to the degree that is popularly supposed.—Philadelphia Record.

FURNISHING STOCKS.

It should be the ambition of furnishing goods managers to lead the styles in their district. It costs so little to have the new things before anybody else that there is no excuse for weak assortment.

The worst thing that can happen to a stock is to have a customer ask for an article which is already so well-known in wear that it is a surprise to the intending purchaser to find that the stock does not contain it. There is a case in point right in the City of New York, in a very prominent district, where a customer enquired for a round-point turn-down collar, and was met with the remark, "We have had no call for it yet." One square away a lively furnishing store had been selling hundreds of these collars.

It is unnecessary to go into details as to the effect on the mind of the customer who entered the store to buy. It goes without saying that he is not likely to enter that place again in quest of up-to-date wear.

Bringing the matter down to a town of moderate size, it is easy to understand the advantage of dropping a line to those who are known to dress well, stating that you have received new lines of ties, shirts or any other wear, giving them a special privilege of first pick. Ten letters and 20c. invested in postage stamps will make an advertisement that is of incalculable benefit. Nothing so appeals to the vanity of a man or woman as just such a tribute to their good taste in dressing.

A man likes to be told that he is a good dresser, and it is easy to understand that a letter of this kind will not only bring himself, but a few of his friends to whom the communication has been proudly shown. A little study of these things means great help to building up and retaining a first-class business.—Economist.

—The slaughter of South American cattle for the season of 1897—1898, according to the report of H. H. Von Eichen, of Buenos Ayres, amounts to 1,342,800, compared with 1,479,500 for the same period in 1896—1897, and 1,387,788 in 1895—1896.

LOST VESSELS.

According to the quarterly return issued by Lloyds' Register of Shipping, the number of vessels of all kinds reported as totally lost or condemned during the quarter ended December 31st, 1897, amounted to 323, of the aggregate tonnage of 178,007. Of this total 30 were abandoned at sea, 47 were condemned, 6 were burnt, 27 were lost through collision, 15 foundered, 182 were wrecked, and 9 are returned as missing. Seventy-five out of this total, with a tonnage of 82,548 tons, were steamers, of which 3 were abandoned at sea, 7 were condemned, 2 were burned, 12 were lost through collision, 4 foundered, 43 were wrecked, and 4 are returned as missing. Of the 248 sailing vessels returned as lost, 27 were abandoned at sea, 40 were condemned, 4 were burned, 15 were lost through collision, 139 were wrecked, and 5 are returned as missing. Sixty-three of the vessels lost, with an aggregate tonnage of 53,688 tons, were British owned, and 14, of 9,179 tons, belonged to the British Colonies. Norway lost 53 vessels of 24,302 tons, the United States of America 43 vessels of 17,995 tons, Sweden 37 vessels of 11,723 tons, Italy 20 vessels of 8,363 tons, France 17 vessels of 13,475 tons, and Denmark 13 vessels of 4,715 tons.