

## SHEEP AND SWINE.

## OXFORD DOWNS.

The Oxford is a breed of only some thirty-five years' standing, obtained originally by crossing a Hampshire Down ewe with a Cotswold ram, and then the issue of that cross with a Southdown ram—the "topping off" with the Southdown being particularly attended to. How far the Oxford Downs may possess the merit of prepotency is not very clearly brought out in the evidence, the fact being that the Oxfords are little known in Canada. Mr. Clay, of Bow Park, whose acquaintance with the Oxfords is that of an English as well as a Canadian farmer, gives the Oxfords on the whole the preference, agreeing at the same time with the other witnesses as to the size and character of the sheep required for the English trade. He seems to be confident, too, of the transmitting power of the Oxford. He says:—

"The Oxford is not a pure-bred sheep to begin with, but it has been bred so consistently that it now gets the name of being a pure-bred sheep, and the best proof that it is so is, that it is used to cross upon animals that are not pure-bred, so as to improve them. The great objection to the Southdown is its want of wool. It is an important item to raise a considerable fleece of wool in this country, and the Oxford Down has the fullest fleece of all the Downs."

Mr. Benson, although not speaking very confidently, leans to the use of the Oxford or Hampshire Down in order to obtain size.—*Report of the Ontario Agricultural Commission.*

## DON'T RAISE SCRUBS.

One of the most senseless and expensive practices in which too many of our farmers indulge is the breeding and raising, year after year, of scrubby, mongrel stock.

They in some way fail to grasp the idea that each animal maintained on the farm is a laboratory in which is to be worked up the products of their fields into compact and marketable form. In fact, the farmer who raises we will say cattle, sheep and swine, becomes a manufacturer, and ordinary business sagacity would suggest that the best machinery for those purposes would be the most profitable. In any other manufacturing enterprise the man would be properly considered a lunatic who invested in machinery that would turn out only the lowest grade of products, to be a drug on the market at prices that yielded little or no profit.

People who buy their meats are every year becoming more fastidious as to quality, and in the leading markets it is only the best that commands the highest remunerative prices; and to be abreast of the competition that will be encountered every where, we must prepare ourselves to furnish products, not of the common or medium quality, but the best. The best are in demand in every market at paying prices, and of the lower grades there is always an over supply that goes begging.

If the question arises as to the steps necessary to inaugurate some of the needed improvements, we would indicate, first, using a better class of sires, something better than the cold blooded scrubs seen on (if we must say it) the majority of farms; secondly, furnishing all kinds of stock a more generous supply and a more variety of food.

The extra expense of procuring purely bred males is the cause of a large per cent. of stock raisers using scrubs of a poor grade instead, and the result is that no perceptible improvement is made, when an expenditure of a few more dollars would have purchased a sire that would have left an indelible impress of improvement along with enhanced value on hundreds of animals that would come after. Our breeders must understand that like produces like, and that breeding scrubs together is a waste of time; that breeding from poor grade sires in this enlightened age is little better than shiftlessness—something no wide-awake man would be guilty of when it can possibly be avoided.—*Selected.*

## SAVE THE GOOD BROOD SOWS.

Corn is high, pork is high. It costs much more to winter a full-grown sow than it does a spring pig. The old sow, if she has reared a litter of pigs, probably is not so attractive looking as are the best of her sow pigs. All these things may tempt one to fatten the sow and keep one of the pigs for breeding purposes. To all contemplating



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this course, we feel like giving *Punch's* celebrated advice to those contemplating matrimony. This was summed up in the one word, "Don't."

As a rule, with few exceptions, a matured sow will rear more, stronger and better pigs than will an unmatured one. In case a sow shall have proved herself undesirable, there is no question that she should be slaughtered, but if her past performance has been satisfactory, the fact that she is two years old is not a sufficient reason for sending her to the butcher. Some of the best brood sows we have known have been in active service until they were half a dozen years old—in some cases even longer.

Persistence in the custom of breeding from young and immature parents can hardly fail to tend to weaken the constitution of the stock. It may tend to further develop early maturity, but this may be gained at too great a cost.—*Breeder's Gazette*

## SHEEP.

The crying need of American agriculture today is a more general incorporation of the sheep into the farming economy. More prolific than horses or cattle, as well as more tractable, subsisting on scantier herbage and requiring less supervision, it claims the additional advantage of "paying for its raising" in annual instalments of marketable fleece, pending its growth to maturity. It is more readily transferred from one inclosure

to another, and is easily restrained by fences which would prove no barrier against the encroachments of other farm stock. Its light tread and love of repose warrant its access to fields and pastures where the tramping of cattle and the tearing of hogs would not be tolerated. It wastes less food in proportion to the quantity consumed, and will hunt and utilize much that would otherwise be lost to the farmer. Yielding a return in both fleece and flesh, it furnishes its owner with the double advantage of catching a good market for his produce, requiring less water, and disposed to work for its food. It is without a peer when summer's drought taxes the farmer's resources for enabling his live stock to maintain an average of thirst and flesh. All that can be said in behalf of feeding live stock on the farm, as distinguished from the soil apoverishing policy of placing the raw grain and grass upon the market, will be found to apply with double emphasis to the farm that carries as a part of its outfit one or more sheep per acre. No, the animal returns more fertility to soil in proportion to the amount exacted for its support, while none equals it in the evenness

with which the droppings are distributed. Notwithstanding the evident advantages an increase in sheep culture brings the agriculture of a country generally, and especially ensuring to the benefit of such farmers as incorporate it into their system, the fact is apparent that sheep are not so numerous or so evenly distributed as they should be.—*Breeder's Gazette.*

## WATER FOR SHEEP.

How many farmers totally neglect providing water for their flocks except in very hot summers, when grass and everything besides is burnt up? But there can scarcely be a doubt that pure, fresh water ought always to be within access of a

flock of sheep, whether they are thought to want it or not. The most experienced and observant of shepherds cannot always tell when this ought to be furnished, for some animals may be in a condition to require it and others not. The only safe rule to follow, therefore, is never to allow the deprivation to be experienced, by providing water so as to be within ready access at all times. This is what Mr. R. Russell, the successful breeder in Kent, does. One invariable rule which he follows, both in summer and in winter, being, never to allow any animal on his farm to go a single day throughout the year without having ready access to two things—pure fresh water and salt.—*London Farm and Home.*

Prof. Stalker, of the Iowa Agricultural College, gives to the *Homestead* the following cure for foot rot in sheep. "The following will apply to the majority of cases of simple foot rot: All loose flakes of horn should be carefully pared off and the hoofs trimmed to a proper shape. The foot should be thoroughly cleaned and carefully done up in a tar bandage. We simply put on tar, and bandage with a bit of strong cloth. If there is much ulceration, a chronic sore having been formed, touch the surface with a solution, one part sulphuric or hydrochloric acid, and three parts water. Dress as above. The animal should be kept where as little wet and filth as possible will reach the foot."