"In Show-yard competitions we have always maintained that a great deal lies with the judges. The conditions of competition usually point out that the prizes are only to be awarded to "the best breeding animals," and knowing the great risk and uncertainty which exists in the case of high-fed stock, it is clear that judges would be perfectly justified if they put such aside. It is not enough to say that the prize depends on the animal "qualifying." The immediate effect of an award in favour of an over-fed animal is to point it out as the best in the section under any circumstances, and thus the idea of over-condition and Show-yard success is perpetuated, to the future joy of many animals that would otherwise have been useful; for those which have been rendered hopelessly barren in consequence of Show-yard success are seldom heard of.

"Another abuse which has arisen in connexion with Show-yard competition is a false mode of shearing sheep, which is neither more nor less than on a par with such "tricks in trade" as are exhibited in the adulteration of food, and other devices to gull the public. Those who understand the matter, and take the trouble to examine the sheep which have been unfairly clipped, soon find out the deception; but others are deceived, and even those who have been appointed to the office of judges have been deceived, or have overlooked what ought at once to have disqualified the sheep. A card, with "Disqualified for being unfairly shorn," attached to every pen where deception had been attempted, would soon put an effectual stop to the practice; and until something like this is done, our Shows will continue to abet practices which, if we call things by their right names, is neither more nor less than cheating."

Soiling Cattle.

This practice is on most arable farms, especially where provision is made of crops near the feeding boxes and yards for carrying it out, a profitable method of increasing the store of manure upon the farm. Where Italian Rye-grass and Lucerne and Clover, liberally treated, are near the feeding-house, cattle can be fattened during the summer months more cheaply than during winter, with at least as great advantage to the fertility of the farm. The practice is very warmly advocated in the earlier editions of "Young's Farmers' Calendar," as follows:—

Enlightened farmers have in many districts adopted this system for horses, but still rejected for cattle; and it will probably take a century to render it as universal as it might be, most profitably. The objections to it are not of any importance; it has been argued that the expense is an object, and that cattle will not thrive so well, nor will cows give so much milk, as if fed in the field. That the expense is something cannot be denied, but that it amounts to anything considerable, is contrary to fact. Mr. Mure fed 240 fatting oxen in sheds through a whole summer by the mowing of one scythe; if the attendance upon the beasts be added to this amount, the whole will evidently come to a sum which, when divided either per head or per acre, will be so low as to do entirely away with this objection. As to the question of thriving, the assertion has been made, as far as it has come to my knowledge, without a trial, and is consequently mere theory. The beasts mentioned above were all sold fat at Smithfield, and did as well as similar beasts had done fed abroad in the most favourable seasons, and better than in any summer not remarkably favourable. I practiced it for several years together very carefully for fatting cattle, weighing alive periodically, both while in stalls and when at Grass, and I found that in soiling they throve better than when abroad. If the world will reason upon every question of farming, they should do it without prejudice, and then their reason would, to my apprehension, agree with these facts. Every one knows how tormenting flies are to cattle when abroad; ride into a field in summer to look at stock, and where do you find them? Not feeding, but standing or resting under trees, in ponds, in rivers, and, if there is no better shelter, in ditches under brambles; in a word, anywhere but feeding in the open air. What they graze is in the morning and evening; and in many cases they lose in the heat of the day all they gain at those moments of their comfort. To this superiority we must add that of the main object, which is the dunghill; in one case this is accumulated in a degree even superior to what is effected in winter; in the other, it is scattered about the pastures, and nine-tenths of it carried away by the flies, or dried almost to a *caput mortuum* by the sun. The prodigious superiority of thus raising a large and very valuable dunghill in one case, and none at all in the other, ought to convince any reasonable man, that there is not a practice in husbandry so decidedly superior as this of soiling, were there not one other reason for it than what have already been produced.

Those farmers who have given particular attention to the state of farmyard manure, as it is made in winter and in summer, and to the efficacy of both, can scarcely have failed to remark that the superiority of the dung arising from any sort of stock in summer is very great to such as is made in winter from stock no better fed.

Cattle, when soiled upon any kind of good food, as Tares, Clover, Chicory, Lucerne, or Grass, make so large a quantity of urine as to demand the greatest quantity of litter; the degree of this moisture, in which their litter is kept, while the weather is hot, much assists a rapid fermentation. On the other hand, when I view the common spectacle of a large yard spread with a thin stratum of straw or stubble, and a parcel of lean straw-fed cows wandering about it, I see the most ingenious way of annihilating litter, without making dung, that the wit of man could have invented. Burning such straw upon the land before sowing Turnips, would be an application not inferior.

Cows thus managed are amongst the most unprofitable stock that can be kept on a farm. With the best food and management, their dung is inferior; but thus kept on a wide expanse of thin litter, well drenched in rain and snow, running to ponds and ditches, they destroy much, but give little.

There is, however, another fact of equal importance, that the food given in stalls or boxes goes so much farther than it will do when grazed where it grows; and when we recollect the old remark, that a beast feeds (or consumes) with five mouths, we shall not be surprised at this fact. A greater stock may thus be supported by the same farm, in one system, than there can be in the other.

Two circumstances demand attention, which, if neglected, will considerably lessen the benefit to be derived from soiling. The one is, to have a plentiful provision of litter; and the other, much care in feeding—to give the beasts but little at a time; if much be tumbled before them, it heats, they pick it over, and the waste may be great; and if a cart be left in the yard loaded, the contents heat, and then cattle will not eat it. A certain degree of care is necessary in everything; and in nothing more than in feeding all sorts of cattle. As to litter, it is an object of such importance, that provision for the system should be gradually made through the winter, if corn enough be not left for summer threshing to supply the beasts. All dry vegetable matter, capable of providing a dry lair in stalls or boxes, leaves, in woodland countries; Fern, dried peat, &c., should thus be collected against the summer months. An enterprising, vigilant farmer, when he has such an object as this in view, will exert every nerve to be prepared for a system the profit of which will depend so much on the care previously taken to be well provided with litter of some sort or other.

The first crops that will be ready for soiling are the Rye, Lucerne, and the Italian Rye-grass, and the Trifolium incarnatum; which may be supposed to last all the stock till the first-sown winter Tares are ready, when the Lucerne left uncut should be mown for hay. The second-sown winter Tares come next; then Clover, to be succeeded by the third sowing of Tares, and by the second growth of Italian Rye-Grass and of Lucerne- After this come spring Tares, and the second growth of Clover; and the third cutting of Italian Rye-grass and of Lucerne may follow. If Chicory be applied to this use, for which it is well adapted, it will, on any good land, be mown thrice, and on very good soils four time. The quantity and value of the manure thus made will surprise those who have not witnessed it. Whether the stock be stalled or fed in boxes, or kept in well-littered yards, covered or open, in divisions, according to sort, size, age, fatness, value, or any other rule of separation, if they are fed carefully, have water at command, and are kept clean, all sorts will thrive to the farmers satisfaction.

Flock Pruning.

Among the many needful rules which every flock-master must never lost sight of, is this: *Always keep your best ewes.* This is the fundamental principle which must guide you in all your labours, if you expect to carry the excellence of your flock one degree higher each year. The reasons for this rule are almost too obvious to require mention. Will any man need to be told that if he sells his best ewes, the buyer will have better sheep than he? If a man with 50 ewes, sells the ten best, it may take him years of careful breeding to get ten more as good as those he sold. Many cannot resist a tempting offer for a good ewe, but it should be remembered that when you sell one such, you sell with her, all her valuable increase for the future. When you have succeeded in bringing your flock to such a degree of excellence that you will not notice the loss of a few of the "number ones," you can sell from the first class ewes. But as you must sell off the yearly increase of the flock, let such be selected as you do not wish to keep, and the present is the best time of the year to make that selection. The winter is the test of a sheep's constitution, and if you have watched your flock with care, you can at this season very quickly select those that fail in the necessary vigour and staunchness to make them good breeders. Let all such be pruned out. Fat them for the butcher, or sell them for what they will bring, to those whose means will not just now enable them to buy higher priced sheep. Set aside all that have objectionable qualities as breeders, and put a mark upon them for future disposal. A sheep may look well, she may be stout and hearty, but at the same time she may breed badly. Make all such into mutton. Cut them off as you would useless limbs from your fruit trees. You can't afford to keep such animals any more than you can afford to have a frog pond in the middle of an acre of good land. The man who makes his selection of sale ewes in the autumn will often cheat himself, for the reason that many poor breeders and poor nurses will look plump and stout, just because they may have starved their lambs. A suggestion on this point is enough for any careful flock-master, and a moment's reflection will show any one the importance of attending to this matter in the proper season.—*N. H. Farmer*

Sheep-killing Dogs.—The *Valley Farmer* proposes a plan for the detection and punishment of dogs which prowl about in the night, killing sheep. The plan is this:—When a sheep is killed, proceed to make a pen of rails, about six feet high, each round of rails converging towards the center,—so that the opening at the top shall be less than the space embraced at the bottom. In this pen, place the remains of the slaughtered sheep, and secure the rest of the flock for a few nights in some other locality. The presumption is that the dog or dogs will revisit the place where the sheep was killed, and scenting the remains in the pen, will clamber over the rails and into the trap. Once in, the peculiar construction of the pen will prevent their escape, hence they will be on hand in the morning to answer for their misdeeds. The pen should be so arranged as to prevent the dogs from digging out, as they will sometimes attempt to do when other means of egress are denied.

Loss of Sheep in Ohio.—The *Ohio Fanmer* says the most serious feature of the great storm on the 17th and 18th ult. aside from the loss of life on the lake, was the destruction of sheep by which something like one hundred thousand, it is estimated, were killed Up to the 14th of June the weather had been so constantly chilly that very few flocks had been sheared. But that day and the 15th and 16th were so genial as to induce a general shearing. The storm commenced on Sunday the 17th, so deliberately that few whose flocks were exposed thought it neccessary to house them, but during the night the heavens opened, the temperature changed, and before daylight Monday morning, from twenty to thirty out of every hundred throughout the Northern part of the state it is belived, were lost. Mr. Mandole, of Franklin, sheared 200 sheep on Saturday, 100 of which were dead on Monday, and others lost half their flocks.

Marking Sheep.—The following directions we copy from the *New Hampshire Mirror*, in farther response to a recent enquiry on the subject:

The advantages of having every sheep in the flock marked with plain figures, such as can be easily read even across a common sheep-yard, are too obvious to every one to need any argument in its favour. The best materials for marking we have ever used are *Red Lead* and *pure Japan*. This mixture will work equally well whether you use iron or wooden types. Many try Venetian Red, which looks very well at first, but it soon rubs off and the figures become obscure. Others, again, when using Japan, mix boiled linseed oil with it, but this is wholly unnecessary. The lead mixes no better with it than with the Japan, and as the latter dries more quickly, the number is not so likely to get rubbed and blurred. The best dish to mix them in is an old-fashioned "flat tin," such as our grandmothers used to bake "Johnny Cakes" in before their open fires. Into this put a few spoonfuls of lead and as much Japan as is needed to mix with it, so the mixture shall be about the thickness of West India molasses. This spreads out over the bottom of your tin, and is just the right depth to cover the surface of your type, hence there will be but little loss. When properly applied we have seen the figures on the darkest Merinos showing themselves with the clearest distinctness round to the end of the year. The marking should be done soon after shearing, and when put on, the sheep should be allowed to go directly from the hands of the marker into an open lot, to prevent them from huddling together and obscuring their numbers by rubbing against each other.