

for his particular locality. True, there are certain understood and well-defined *points* characterising the true breed in every part of the kingdom; but besides those departures which taste, or the expectation of greater profit, have caused to be made from the original type, the silent agencies of soil and climate exert a far more powerful influence on the frame and constitution than is generally supposed. Bakewell's sheep were distinguished by the general parallelogrammic outline; the small head covered with short white hair; the open countenance and white muzzle; the full, yet quiet eye, and long, thin, well-placed ear; the full, but tapering neck, and deep wide chest; the uniform broad and straight firm back, terminating in the square rump, and full, deep shoulder; the well arched rib, full plate, and light offal; the long, full quarter, well turned twist, and uniformly fine bone; the thin, soft, elastic pelt, and mellow handling. While retaining these valuable properties as the basis of their operations, succeeding breeders have discovered that others might be communicated, by which the value of their flocks would be materially enhanced, and the general symmetry rather augmented than diminished. Hence, among other things, the general enlargement of carcase; the greatly increased covering of wool—qualities, indeed, which Bakewell seems rather to have shunned—as well as the greater fertility and better milking properties of the ewe; though the latter may be traced rather to his in-and-in breeding, than to any inherent defect in his sheep as a breed. These, and some minor changes, have somewhat altered the general appearance of the Leicester of our day, though the tastes and caprices of individual breeders will not wholly account for many characters observable to indifferent districts. In one county, for instance, we have a long curly fleece, while in another the wool is much closer and comparatively short: here we have a large, bareheaded, soft-looking animal; and there, one which, without being undersized, seems from its hardy sprightly look, better adapted to withstand the vicissitudes of our variable climate.

When the immense and increasing extent to which the Leicester is employed in the breeding of crosses, is considered, the number of rams reared for this purpose must be very great. This is clearly shown by the complete change in the kind of stock now brought forward at most of the great border markets, compared with what they were fifty years ago.

Such a complete change marks not only the great value of the Leicester as a basis for crossing on the male side, but also the immense revolution which the general introduction of artificial manures and turnip husbandry has effected. When these were but little known, few sheep were fattened during the winter months, and the hill farmer had no small difficulty in finding a market for his annual cast. But as the growing of turnips, and the value of draining and liming became better understood, lean stock were

required to consume the larger quantity of food raised; and, to meet this increased demand, breeders were led, by gradual steps, to improve their flocks; first, by bestowing greater attention upon their breeding and general comforts, and then—as the reclaiming of these arable portions of their grazings progressed—by at length, in many cases, changing their breed of sheep altogether; or, by crossing with other varieties, producing animals more profitable to themselves, and more readily fattened by those into whose hands they eventually fell.

The great value of the breed consisting in a ready disposition to fatten, or, in other words, to arrive at maturity at an early age, it is evident, that the kind of treatment required must be such as will most readily conduce to this end. With the exception of ewes and rams, none are kept until they are more than two years old, while the practice—daily becoming more common—with most breeders, is to have them ready for the butcher at fifteen or sixteen months old, or immediately after being shorn. To be able to attain this, it is necessary that they should be well fed from the day they are dropt. The season when this should take place must necessarily vary in different parts of the country. With the view of gaining a few weeks, it was at one time more fashionable than at present, to have the lambs coming about the New-year; but besides the risk of storms—frequently too severe at that season for newly dropt lambs of a tender breed—the ewes must be fed almost entirely upon turnips or other roots, which neither furnish such an abundant supply of milk, nor of such nourishing quality, as that produced when grass forms their staple food. Accordingly the beginning of March is now by most considered to be sufficiently early, as by that time the influence of spring is being felt on the pastures, which, if still deficient, can be supplemented with turnips or mangold.

By giving the breeding ewes moderate keep from the time their lambs are weaned, until within a few days of their receiving the ram, when they should be supplied with a fresher pasture, they will be found in that condition which has been found to be most conducive to fertility. Besides being beneficial to the ewes, this practice is attended with another advantage, from the best pasture being wholly reserved for the feeding stock, which are thus progressing for an early market.

Though the Leicester, in the hands of Bakewell, and his immediate successors, shewed little tendency to produce twins, this arose partly from the high condition in which their ewes were kept, and partly the belief that one lamb was as much as any ewe could bring to that condition and size required by ram breeders; while, from their practice of too close breeding, their ewes generally, were bad nurses, and often unable to do justice to a single lamb. Though still neither so prolific, nor yielding so much milk as some of the other native breeds, the