

SHEEP AND SWINE.

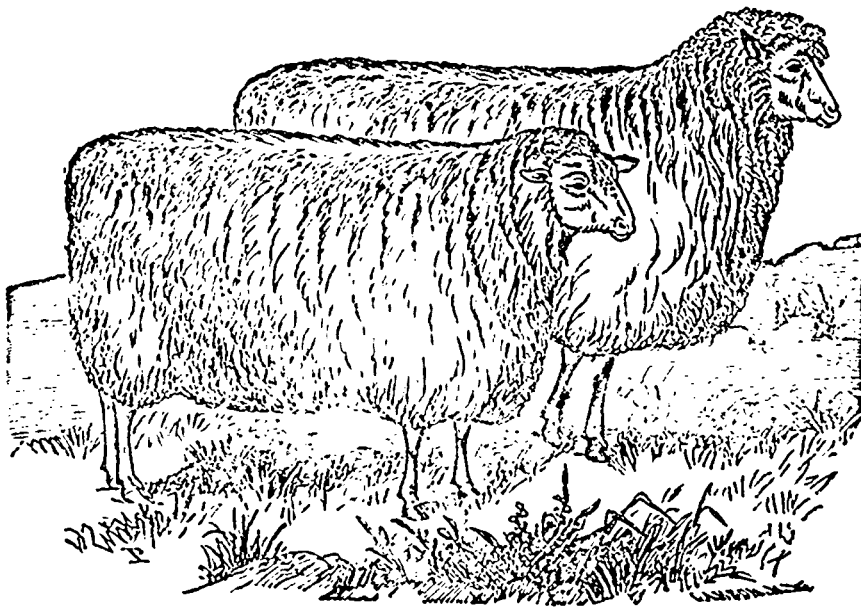
THE MUTTON BREEDS AND THEIR ORIGIN.

Randall classes the mutton breed as follows: The Leicesters, Cotswolds, New Oxfordshires, Southdowns, Hampshire Downs, Shropshire-downs, and the Oxfordshire Downs. The Leicesters, under the most favourable circumstances for their development, perhaps excel others in earliness of maturity, and none make better returns for the amount of food consumed by them. But they require better shelter, keep and care than any other variety. The ewes are not so prolific nor so good nurses as those of the other mutton families, and their lambs, when first dropped, demand a good deal of attention. The mutton is only medium in quality, and, owing to its great amount of outside fat, is not generally sought to supply American tables. The origin of this sheep owes much of its excellence to the sagacity and skill of the celebrated breeder, Mr. Bakewell. The Lincolnshire, the Dorsetshire, the Gloucestershire and the New Oxfordshire are large, coarse-wooled and coarse-boned sheep, which have their partisans in particular districts and are much crossed and intermixed with others, but have not attained the enviable distinction of being improved so as to form a distinct and extensively popular race. The Cotswolds are a larger, hardier and more prolific sheep than the preceding, and the ewes are better mothers. They furnish available combing wool and are a decidedly favourite sheep with the breeders of long-wools in the United States. The Cotswolds, as a breed, are of great antiquity. The Southdowns, the original Sussex or Southdowns, have, probably, the purest blood, free from admixture during the long period which covers the rise and development of the British wool manufacture and the increase of meat production of any British sheep. Their improvement has been long continued, and is still continuing, apparently without the necessity of recurrence to any foreign blood for amelioration of a single objectionable point. The Hampshire Downs—this family is the result of a cross between the Southdown and a short-wooled English variety of greater size and better constitution. Some writers conjecture that they have also a slight infusion of Cotswold blood. They are coarser in appearance than the Southdowns, and their mutton sells half a cent less per pound in the market, but they possess nearly all the good qualities of the former and are hardier. They are favourites in many parts of England, but have not been introduced extensively into the United States. The Shropshire-Downs, like the preceding, have been produced by a Southdown cross, are very hardy, short-wooled stock, and most of the flocks have also a dip of the Leicester and Cotswold blood. They are nearly as large as the last-named families, and they promise to unite to an uncommon degree the good qualities of the short and long wools, being larger than the former and hardier, and the ewes are highly prolific and are excellent mothers. Superior specimens of them are to be found in the United States and Canada. The Oxfordshire-Down is comparatively a modern family, is of a cross between the Hampshire Down or the Southdowns and Cotswolds, and the statements above made in respect to the Shropshires will apply equally well to them, though the two families

vary in appearance and in several of their minor qualities. The Cheviot and black-faced sheep of Scotland have some peculiarities which entitle them to a brief notice. Both kinds are of moderate size and good shape, weighing, when dressed, from twelve to twenty pounds to a quarter. Their wool, especially that of the black-faced, is of very inferior quality. They are thrifty and their mutton is of the best quality, commanding a high price, from its resemblance in taste to venison, and is much sought after by epicures. They are both well adapted to cold and mountainous regions of the country they inhabit. On the upper part of the hill in Northumberland, which is properly termed the Cheviot, is the central locality of the sheep called by that name. They have been there from time immemorial.—*From a Paper by Hon. Robert Mitchell, of Princeton, Indiana.*

THE PIG IN WINTER.

The great importance of this class of stock commercially, and the large extent to which its flesh is used for home consumption, demands thorough discussion of its management in all its phases. The proper system of winter-feeding requires to



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be better settled. The old "storing" system, by which a pig is simply kept alive during the winter, that it may be ready to grow next summer, has not yet been wholly given up, but may be found in full operation in many parts of our country. It does not seem as if every feeder should have discovered the utter improvidence of this practice. If pigs were like a waggon, a bin grain, or a mow of hay, that might be kept over winter without expense, there would be some excuse for it, but when we reflect that two-thirds of a full ration is used merely as the food of support, without adding anything to the weight or value of the pig, this practice of keeping pigs through the winter, of at any other time, without constant growth, seems absolutely indefensible.

As we have shown in previous chapters, time is a most important factor in the problem of pig-feeding. Every week that a pig is kept without growth, the feed is worse than thrown away, because it takes time to overcome the unthrifty habit, and all the food is lost till growth begins again. It is thus evident that the skilful feeder must strive after continued and unrelenting growth.

The winter season should be no exception to this steady growth, although it will require more food to put on a pound of gain in winter than in summer, unless the temperature of the pig-pen is raised to near summer warmth. All animals must keep up their heat by consumption of food, and it makes a great difference whether the surrounding

air is at zero or sixty degrees above. It would seem, therefore, that, while thrift is as necessary in winter as in summer, the feeder may control the temperature and save a large percentage of food in winter growth.

We have just discussed the importance of grass as a part of the ration of the pig. It might reasonably be supposed that the pig would require some fibrous food in winter as well as in summer; and if green clover is good in summer, why not nicely cured clover hay in winter. Having established the necessity of grass in its season, for promotion of health, the writer experimented also on the use of clover hay in winter as an addition to the grain ration.

Having four pigs of the same age, and about the same weight, they were divided into two lots of two each. Each lot weighed 150 pounds at the commencement of the experiment. One lot was fed cornmeal, wet with warm water, and allowed to stand some ten or twelve hours. The other lot was fed about two quarts each of short-cut clover hay, mixed with cornmeal, wet with hot water, and allowed to stand the same length of time. Each lot was fed without stint upon its ration, and the experiment continued for 120

days. As the experiment with grass, the lot on clover-hay and meal had the best appetite, ate the most steadily and showed greater thrift; but the lot on meal alone were apparently healthier than those on meal alone in the other experiment; but they were older, and the weather being colder, were not so feverish. This latter lot gained 110 pounds per head; whilst the lot on clover-hay and meal gained 148 pounds each, or thirty per cent. more. Since this we have often fed pigs on fibrous food in winter, and always successfully. Feeding clover-hay in winter may be novel; but why should it not be considered as appropriate to feed pigs clover hay in winter, as to feed cattle and horses clover-hay in winter? The pig eats green

clover in summer, if he can get it, as profitably as the cow or horse; and when farmers understand the true system of feeding, clover-hay will generally make part of the winter ration of pigs.

—*From Feeding Animals, Stewart.*

FEED FOR PIGS.

Make the cobs into neat winrows about a foot high, and after the wind has swept through them an hour or so set fire to them. When charred rake them down and sprinkle water on the mass, stir them again, and sprinkle again to be sure they do not go on burning and go to ashes. If now a seasoning of salt be thrown over the pile there will be a lot of feed for the pigs and hogs, which they will enjoy hugely.—*Thoroughbred Stock Journal.*

It is a matter not sufficiently known, that sheep give material assistance in keeping land free from weeds. Many of the most pernicious weeds with which farmers have to contend are generally relished by sheep, in their early or soft state, and ultimately eradicated in this way.

It is not well to keep sheep too closely housed even in winter, for they will stand a very low temperature if they are kept dry; but if left out for any length of time while it is raining or snowing the fleece will retain the moisture, and the animal will suffer from cold even in moderate winter weather.