

THE MONTHS—JUNE.

"For who would sing the flowers of June,
Though from grey morn to blazing noon,
From blazing noon to dewy eve,
The chaplet of his song to weave,
Would find his summer daylight fail,
And hear half told the pleasing tale."

The present month differs very materially in most of its characteristics from those of the last and its return is right welcome to all true lovers of nature, in which class should be included every individual following rural pursuits. Coleridge well describes the characteristic of this month, when he terms it "the leafy month of June." Most of the cultivated crops are now making rapid advancement, and the husbandman, having got over the labors and anxieties of seed time contemplates with hope and satisfaction, the progress which the fruits of his skill and exertions are daily making. The frosty nights of May, so often fatal to the early germs of vegetation, are now passed and the increasing power of solar light and heat gives to the vegetable kingdom an astonishing impetus, and establishes at once the reign of summer. Although in our climate there are occasionally some very hot days in June, yet upon the whole it must be regarded as, perhaps, the pleasantest month of the year. The flowers are more numerous, the leaves thicker, and the grass and foliage of a deeper green. Nature wears a calmer and more settled aspect; and at noon-time, on a June day, the birds sing but little, few sounds are heard in the woods and fields, save the humming of that busy little chemist, the bee, which is distilling honey from the flowers. All that the old classic poets say of May, as descriptive of southern skies and climates, becomes applicable to us who inhabit these northerly regions, at the beginning of June.

Soft copious showers are extremely welcome towards the beginning of this month, as vegetation frequently suffers from continued drought.—Moisture combined with the daily increasing heat produces an astonishing growth of the cultivated crops.—The immortal poet of the seasons, has graphically described the effects of these genial showers; and we may remark further, that what is true of Britain, in regard to these phenomena, is even more strikingly so in reference to Canada;

"Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm: that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing wood,
Or rustling turn the many twinkling leaves,
Of aspen tall."

At last

The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshen'd world,
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard,
By such as wander through the forest walks,

Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves,
But who can hold the shade while heaven descends,
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap?—"

One of the most interesting and popular species of rural labor,—sheep shearing,—commences as soon as the weather is sufficiently settled and warm that the sheep may, without danger, be deprived of the principal part of their clothing. There seems no settled opinion in Canada as to the precise time when the operation should be performed, but this much may be safely affirmed that the wool is better on the sheep's back until the weather sets in decidedly warm. To do otherwise, as is sometimes the case, is a decided act of cruelty, as well as false economy. In Greece, and some other southern countries, sheep were accustomed to be shorn early, but their comfort was so much consulted, that it was a frequent practice to provide the animals—particularly the weaker ones, with a sort of garment or covering made of cloth:—a practice we believe not wholly unknown in some of the more elevated districts of the northern portion of Britain at the present day.

Too little attention is generally paid to that most necessary preliminary,—the thorough washing of the animal previous to shearing. This operation when properly performed cleanses the fleece from various kinds of impurity and increases its marketable value. In the arid climate of our Australian Provinces, sheep have frequently to be shorn and the wool shipped for the British market, with a very imperfect washing, or indeed without any washing at all.—In the British Islands excellent accommodation is usually provided for this object, and the *modus operandi*, has been truthfully described by Dyer in the following lines:—

"On the bank

Of a clear river, gently drive the flock.
And plunge them one by one into the flood:
Plung'd in the flood, not long the struggler sinks,
With his white flakes, that glisten through the tide;
The sturdy rustic, in the middle wan,
Awaits to seize him rising; one arm bears
His lifted head above the limpid stream,
While the full clammy fleece the other laves
Around, laborious, with repeated toil;
And then resigns him to the sunny bank,
Where bleating loud, he shakes his dripping locks."

Sheep-Shearing among large flockmasters in the old County, is a process that is usually conducted with a considerable degree of ceremony and dignity, being a festival as well as a piece of labor. The Sheep Shearings of Holkham, in the County of Norfolk, the hospitable seat of Mr. Cooke, afterward Earl of Leicester, have had a world-renowned reputation. These annual gatherings of a large number of influential Agriculturists from all parts of the United Kingdom, were highly conducive not only to social conviviality, but also to rural improvement generally.