

SHEEP AND SWINE.**ORIGIN OF THE MERINO SHEEP.**

The merino sheep are descended from the ancient Tarentine sheep of the Greeks and Romans. The Greeks took especial care to breed the finest woolled sheep. They had no cotton, nor silk, and very little linen, so they took especial pains to produce the finest wool. In order to improve the fine quality of the wool of their Tarentine breed, they covered the sheep with clothes in cold weather, as it was found by experience that exposure to cold made the wool coarser. By these efforts to improve the quality of the wool, they rendered the sheep very delicate, and unable to withstand exposure or rough usage. The Roman crossed the Tarentine sheep with the best sheep of Africa, and obtained a stronger breed, and yet preserved the fineness of the fleece. These improved sheep were kept largely in the province of Spain, and some of them sold for over \$1,000 in gold per head at a time when the value of money was much greater than it is now. When the barbarians swept over the Roman Empire, most of these sheep were destroyed; but in the mountainous region of Spain some were preserved, and from these are descended the merino of the present time.

HEALTHY HOGS.

The hog of former days was hardy and healthy, but now it is said that he is handsome and helpless. It used to be that not more than five per cent. of the hogs perished by disease, but a writer tells us that now "fifty per cent. mortality is nearer correct than five. The hog problem is 'from a given amount of feed to make the greatest amount of fat, and in the shortest time.' In pursuing this idea, people have gone too far. Coming events seem likely to compel us to look a little to first principles. A blacksmith's arm is his best development. A letter-carrier's leg, a professor's brain, an alderman's stomach, are severally theirs. By parity of reasoning the development of the hog is as the alderman—all toward stomach and fat. But the comparison is incomplete unless we fatten the alderman when he is sixteen. The present hog fattens, but is seldom healthy. Scarcely any oxygen colours his blood red, as formerly, but the sluggish black blood, propelled by a heart smaller than it should be, enables him to live along with great care, until he is ready for the market. His lungs are so delicate that one 'dogging' kills him. His liver is discolored and spotted. He has kidney worms. His bones are soft and easily broken. His intestines are full of wind. He has catarrh, trichinæ, cholera."—*Farmer's Magazine.*

ALCOHOL EXPERIMENTS ON PIGS.

It may not be generally known that systematic experiments upon pigs are being made these days at Paris by a group of scientific men with the view of ascertaining the precise action of alcohol upon the processes of digestion, respiration, and secretion. In a very interesting paper upon these experiments by M. Dejardin Beaumetz we find it stated, with a touch of unconscious humour, that the pig has been chosen to be experimented upon

because, in the first place, his digestive apparatus closely resembles in all essential respects that of man; and in the next place, because the pig is the only animal (besides man, we presume) that will ungrudgingly consent to be "dosed" with alcohol. It was the intention of the National Temperance League to invite M. Beaumetz and his colleagues to an International Congress of scientific "alcoholists," which was to be held in London in August next; we learn, however, that the executive of the League resolved yesterday to abandon this idea for the present. Further, we are given to understand that the congress, at which the final results of the investigations of M. Beaumetz and his coadjutors are to be made known, will be held in the autumn at the Hague.—*Pull Mall Gazette.*

SHEEP AND WEEDS.

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 may also be observed that the younger the pastures are when the sheep are put to graze, the more effectual they will be in keeping in subjection and finally killing out the weeds.—*Farmers' Magazine.*

MARY'S LITTLE LAMB.

A writer in the *Husbandman* says that one night recently he was aroused by the barking of a dog. He looked out of the window, and, as it was moonlight, he saw two dogs passing the house toward a yard in which about seventy sheep were kept. Fearing mischief, he proceeded to the door, but before he had done dressing the whole flock came rushing to the house, having broken through a panel of fence. One sheep was bitten, but the dogs had "skedaddled." Why did the sheep break through and come to the house? The owner thinks because there were in the flock two pet lambs that had been used to running in the house yard, and that led the flock home for safety. He believes it a good idea to undergo the nuisance of pet lambs to be afterward turned with the regular flock, and act as their guide in case of attack by dogs, and breaks out in this stanza of parody:

Let Mary have a little lamb
And keep it in the flock,
And when the dogs attack your sheep
The lamb will wake you up.

"BUTTERMILK poured over the back of a scurvy pig will remove the scurf." We apply this remedy *inside* of our pigs.

"SALT and charcoal fed to pigs every week will greatly benefit their health." We salt our pigs in the pork barrel—don't be afraid of giving 'em too much, and when well cured sell them and cure yourself by eating strawberries.

ELEPHANT milk is said to be 100 per cent. richer in butter than the milk of an average Jersey cow.

SEVERAL adherents of the Primitive Methodist Church will leave Toronto April 1st to take possession of their property in Qu'Appelle, where the denomination have secured land to establish a colony.

THE DAIRY.**STRINGY MILK.**

Editor RURAL CANADIAN:

We have been troubled for the past two years with cows giving milk which, if it stands for two days or more, becomes stringy when poured out. If a little warm water is put in, it becomes like starch. We thought it might be the pasture, but there is the same trouble in winter.

MILKMAN.

[It is difficult to suggest an explanation of the case above presented, without a fuller knowledge of the circumstances. From the trouble appearing in winter as well as summer, one would suspect an unfavourable atmosphere affecting the milk. Where is it set? If in a cellar or milk-house, is the air perfectly sweet and pure? Milk is extremely sensitive to atmospheric and other impurities. People often think there is something wrong with the cows or their food, when the real source of the evil is a foul, tainted, and unwholesome cellar or milk-house.—Ed. R. C.]

COMPLIMENTARY REFERENCES TO ONTARIO DAIRYMEN.

The *N. Y. Tribune* has a couple of articles containing allusions to Ontario dairymen which we reprint with pride and pleasure, feelings which we are sure will be shared by all the readers of the *RURAL CANADIAN*. It indicates no small progress in dairy matters that any of our people who are engaged in this industry should be held up as examples and quoted as authorities to those who had the start of us, and had attained celebrity in the British markets before we entered them:—

QUALITY OF CHEESE.

It is a noticeable fact that those who make the finest cheese for export, make also the quality most desired for home use. The largest and best-informed shippers call for goods with a mild and clean flavour and "plenty of quality," which means a cheese with a rich and plastic texture, meaty, smooth and silky to the feel, and melting on the tongue—as opposed to hard and dry, but not so soft and moist as to give the impression of a lack of substance when pressed between the thumb and finger. This is what suits the best British consumers, and is equally acceptable to our own people. The English are particular about having a cheese not hard, but solid. Americans will accept one that is porous, and this appears to be the main difference in the tastes of the better classes of the two nations.

A remark dropped at the recent Western Ontario Dairymen's meeting by Mr. William Gillard, of the Tavistock factory, that he annually retails to his patrons five to six tons of cheese, is confirmatory of this point. He is a judge of good cheese, and knows how to make it. His cheese is made on the "sweet curd" plan, and is remarkably even. It is of the mild, clean-flavoured, compact, but rich and plastic kind called for by Thomas Ballantyne, who is perfectly familiar with English preferences, and the largest exporter in Canada. Mr. Gillard's cheese always goes at the very top of the market for shipping, and the favour it finds with his patrons is told in the amount they consume. If every factory sold as much, it would take half the exports to