

agriculture. And if the Continent were made better acquainted with our peculiar breeds of sheep, and also with the peculiar condition of the wool market and the requirements of the people generally, we should have them coming to us for sheep to the same extent that they now come to us for other cattle. In 1855 we exhibited in Paris a collective series of English agricultural produce, and one of the principal things was our wool produce. Fair market fleeces of every distinct breed, and also of all the more successful crosses, were collected by Professor Wilson, and created great interest. The Cheviot was one of the wools that was most valued for manufacturing purposes; and from the information obtained there, it appeared that the day for the fine qualities of wools was rapidly passing away. We now none of us wear the fine Saxony cloths that we used to wear when merino wool was sold at a high price. The great object of the day now is to get a cheaper article that can be worn by the many, and clear-headed farmers on the Continent see that they have not that demand for the expensive short wools; and it will be their policy to change their merinos to a breed of sheep that shall give more mutton, a large frame, and a larger quantity of a cheaper description of wool. In Australia and New Zealand the flocks are kept out in the open air, the animal secretes its wool under natural conditions, and the fibre throughout is equal. But when you come to the Continent—take the case of Moravia and Silesia—you can, with a microscope, distinctly see the secretion that has taken place during the cold months of winter, differing in size and in spiral form from that which is secreted during the warm months of summer. You do not see that in the Australian wools. At the Exhibition in Paris there was a great deal of interest taken in the wools. Baron Barathen got the first prize for the finest wool, a magnificent Moravian fleece; this fleece weighed about 14 ounces, and that was the produce of a sheep of five years old, and the wool was worth four francs. On that occasion Professor Wilson produced a Lincoln fleece that was the produce of a sheep 14 months old, and it weighed 20 lbs.; and the price was valued at ten pence per lb. at that period, (it is worth more now). Of course it was decided that the latter was the most valuable description of sheep for all purposes. Mr. Southey, the greatest agent for the Australian and New Zealand wool, sent a bale of wool that weighed 350 lbs., and this was estimated by the French experts as equal in quality and in market value to Baron Barathen's choice fleece. That at once showed that the foreign growers could not successfully compete in the wool market with England and her colonies; and it is believed that the tendency that was then generated, and has been growing since, is for the foreigner to give up growing these fine class wools upon small animals, and to substitute for

them the large frame sheep, carrying more wool of a lower price. To do that they will have to come to England to obtain some of our stock to cross with their own. France for some eight or ten years has been adopting this policy. Those very high class merinos are now nearly all replaced by what they call the Metis merino, a cross breed; and those are giving way to another cross, chiefly with the Leicester, which they call the Dishley merino, which are making an immense deal more mutton and much heavier fleeces than the merino did before. At the same time the wool is of a quality equal to the requirements for the best manufactures of the present day.

Mr. Gurdon Rebow had crossed his grazing flock of Southdowns with the Leicester. The hogget then made 8½ lbs. half breed, and 7 lbs. all Down—but the whole flock was 6 lbs. on the average for the hogget at 22d. last year, and the flock at 20d. If we can get 1½ or 2 lbs. more wool, and at least 10 lbs. more in the carcase, with the same amount of feeding, we certainly ought to do so. He tried to cross with the Cotswold the year before last, and he had them feeding one against the other; but the Cotswolds were so enormously voracious, that they would not bear comparison with the others.

The Chairman: But you get it back in mutton.

Professor Wilson: We must not lose sight of the fact that wool cannot be made for nothing, and that the amount of food required to make 1 lb. of wool will make 3 lbs. of meat. Therefore, we have to consider the relative value of wool and meat.

Mr. Hobbs said he was aware we could produce wool almost of any quality and any length. He had seen a specimen of wool 30 inches in length off a Lincoln sheep. It was two years' growth. We must not consider that we can have either the Leicester or the Lincolnshire flock in the South of England, or get that fine quality of wool which they get on the continent, unless we house our sheep and feed them as they do. We cannot get a fine quality without housing. We get a finer quality by yarding our sheep; but with our system of folding—with the ammonia which certainly affects the wool as much with our Southdowns as with the merinos—we shall never be able to gain the lustre which we desire with long or short wools. In the South of England, wherever there are large flocks of sheep that are accustomed to walk daily over a large tract of poor land, wherever the folding with Turnips is very much carried out, we can have our short-wooled sheep of a greatly increased length of staple, and still a quality of wool nearly as fine. There is another point that requires great consideration, and that is respecting the management. We do not in the spring of the year feed our flock sufficiently well. We look to one point only when we should look to both. Nothing wool