

Loak Sheep at the Show of the Royal Agricultural Society of England at Leeds.

Seen at the show of the Royal Agricultural Society of England at Leeds last year, amongst numerous lots exhibited we noticed a variety of mountain or hill sheep called Loaks, very much resembling the Scotch black-faced, but upon nearer inspection, exhibited much difference in proportions, and the wool a finer staple. Prizes offered by the Leeds local committee for the best section for the mountain breeds for the Loak ram and the best pen of 5 Loak ewes were awarded Mr. Jonathan Peel, of Knowles-Manor, who gives the following account of

the Loak is an old indigenous breed inhabiting the Lancashire and Yorkshire hills, the blood being in the neighbourhood of Ley, Rochdale, and also of Pendle Hill, Clitheroe. They have long been in high esteem in their own district, and having been bred of late years, are gradually extending themselves and taking the place of mixed breeds in the neighbouring hills. The rams are now sought after to improve these mixed breeds, the attempt being by continued crosses with the flocks gradually towards the pure type. They are perfectly hardy, excellent eaters, and very prolific. The wool and flesh of very superior quality. From experience I am able to say that in all these qualities they exceed the black-faces. I lost much time and labour, by crosses with Southdowns and Shropshire Downs, to strengthen their points, but was unsuccessful; now, however, I have reverted entirely to Loak, and have kept away every prize at the last year's show and sold my draft ewes at two guineas each. Few but drafts are ever to be bought, of course, do they often fetch the price I receive. Thirty shillings would, perhaps, be the price of good ones. I have been glad to send up fleeces to the Great Exhibition and shall exhibit in all the 'mountain classes at Battersea."

At the great show at Leeds, we have been enabled to find out something concerning this variety and seemingly hardy breed of sheep, after correction of our English friends may be better able to throw light on the matter. We are in some degree impressed with the fact that though the foundation has been the original indigenous breed bred on Lancashire and Yorkshire hills and the hill stretching away to the borders of Scotland have been with consummate judgment with some other breed, which, while retaining the original handsome and characteristic of the old race, conferred a greater robust form and greater aptitude to fatten. I am somewhat fortified in this opinion by Mr. Peel, who says, in remarking on the Lanca-

shire sheep, "Some flocks are kept on the mountains, in a very poor and neglected condition, and others are found on the low and fertile plains of the west; but the stock of sheep is small and ill attended, and the wool is very dirty and coarse and kempy, and the greater part possesses all the bad properties of the neglected mountain sheep." Youatt says, "This is very severe criticism, and doubtless was perfectly true at the time. More attention is now paid to sheep husbandry, but not so much as it deserves."

"The prevailing breed, what is called here the Woodland horned sheep—a variety of the heath or mountain sheep, which, beginning to appear on the hilly country, are spread over the whole north, to the very extreme of Scotland. They are found pure, or with almost every variety of cross; but the principal crosses, and which are decided improvements, are the Leicester or the Southdown, and by means of which both the carcase and the wool are increased in weight and value." Again, "The two ranges of hills, the Western and Eastern Moorlands occupy the greater portion of it (North Riding of Yorkshire). They are cold and desolate, and covered with heath; but the valleys by which they are intersected contain much good soil, and are well cultivated. The sheep that are found on them live on the open heaths all the year round. Their summer food at least, and often their winter food too, consists of heath and rushes, and a few of the coarsest grasses. The long-woolled sheep could not live there, and their owners have wisely refrained from contesting the possession of these hills. The moorland sheep are horned, and have black or mottled faces or legs. Their horns spread wide. Mr. Marshall says that the covering of their buttocks is mere hair, resembling the shag of the goat more than the wool of a sheep; but this is considered a mark of hardness. They are small, being not much larger than the heath sheep of Norfolk. Ewes weigh from 7 to 10 pounds per quarter, and the wethers from 10 to 14 pounds. Mr. Marshall was a good judge of sheep, and there can be no doubt that the description was accurate at the time when he wrote; but the farmers have become better informed and the sheep have materially improved." — *Irish Farmer's Gazette*.

Evil Effects of Pampering Cattle.

We learn from recent English papers that Mr. Booth's celebrated short horn cow, *Queen Mab*, which obtained either first or second prizes at the National shows both of England and Scotland, has proved, in consequence of too high feeding, incapable of breeding. We saw this animal at the English Society's Show at Canterbury, in 1860, when doubts were gravely expres-