

animal fatty matter which imparts to wool its peculiar odour. The medium quality of yolk in short-woolled sheep, according to Youatt, is about $\frac{1}{2}$ the fleece. More yolk is found on the breast and neck of the sheep than on any other part of the body, and it is there that the finest and softest wool grows. Softness of the pile is, therefore, evidently connected with the presence and quality of yolk. There is no doubt that this

the fore-legs *b* under his left arm *c*, he shears the belly across from side to side down to the groins. In passing down the belly and groin, where the skin is naturally loose, while the shears *d* are at work, the palm of the left hand *e* pulls the skin tight. The scrotum *f* is then bared, then the inside of the thighs *g g*, and lastly, the sides of the tail *h*. These are all the parts that are reached in this position. For the clipping of these parts small shears suffice; and as the wool there is short, and of a detached character, it is best clipped by the *points* of the shears, as carefully held close, like *d*.



Fig. 3.

substance is designed to nourish the wool and to give it richness and pliability. In what way is the growth of the wool promoted? By paying more attention than our farmers are accustomed to give to the quantity and quality of this substance possessed by the animals which they select for breeding purposes, the quantity and quality of the yolk, on which farmers seldom bestow a thought, and the nature of which they neither understand nor care about, will, at some future period, be regarded as the very essential and cardinal points of the sheep—considered as a wool bearing animal, I must add to M. Youatt's expression of opinion; for wool is so low in price and mutton so dear, that the question now-a-days is: which sheep will produce the most and finest quality of meat?

Shearing.—A smooth barn-floor is the best place for this operation. Our flocks are so small that no extensive preparation is needed. The best shears have additional springs between the handles to separate the blades more forcibly, but they hurt the hand, and are not worth the trouble. The great thing in shearing is to keep the points clear of the skin by gently pressing the blades upon the skin—keep the hand low, and rest the broad part of the blades upon the skin—you will not cut your sheep much if this is attended to. With scissors, such as I have seen used in the French country, but ragged work can be made.

Our engravings illustrate the three stages of shearing; First, after setting the sheep on its rump, and on the supposition that the clipper is a right-handed man, he rests on his right knee, and leans the back of the sheep against his left leg *a*, bent. Taking the shears in his right hand, and holding up the sheep's mouth with his left, he first clip the short wool on the front of the neck, and then passes down the throat and breast between the fore-legs to the belly. Then placing

Fig. 2 represents the *second* stage of clipping. Its position for the sheep is gained by first relieving its fore-legs *b* from their position in fig. 1, and, gently turning the sheep upon its far side, while the shearer, resting on both knees, supports its far shoulder upon his lap. You may always rely upon this fact—the more a sheep feels at ease, the more readily it will lie quiet to be clipped. Supporting its head with his left hand, the clipper first removes the wool from behind the head, then around the entire back of the neck to the shoulder-top. He then slips its head and neck *a* under his left arm *g*, and thus having the left hand at liberty, he keeps the skin tight with it, while he clips the wool with the right, from where the clipping in the first position, fig. 1, was left off to the back-bone, all the way down the near side. In the figure, the fleece appears to be removed about half-way down the carcass; the left hand *b* lying flat, keeping the skin tight; while the right hand *e* holds the shears at the right part, and in the proper position. The clipper thus proceeds to the thigh and the rump and the tail *d*, which he entirely bared at this time.

Clearing the sheet of the loose parts of the fleece, the clipper, holding by the head, lays over the sheep on its clipped or near side, while still continuing on his knees; and he then rests his right knee, fig. 3, over its neck on the ground, and his right foot *b* on its toes, the ankle keeping the sheep's head down to the ground. This is the *third* position in clipping. The wool having been bared to the shoulder in the second position, the clipper has now nothing to do but to commence where it was then left off, and to clear the fleece from the far side from the back-bone, where it was left off in fig. 2, in the second position, towards the belly, where the clipping was left off in the first position, fig. 1.—the left hand *e* being still at liberty to keep the skin tight, while the right hand *f* uses the shears across the whole side to the tail. The fleece *g* is now quite freed from the sheep. In assisting the sheep to rise, care must be taken that its feet are free from entanglement with the fleece, otherwise, in its eagerness to escape from the unusual treatment it has just received, it will tear the fleece to pieces.*

On comparing the attitudes of the clipper and of the sheep in the different stages of clipping just described, with those of a mode very common in the country, it is necessary to look again at the *first* stage of the process, fig. 1, the common practice of conducting which is to place the sheep upright on its tail, and the clipper to stand on his feet, supporting its back against his legs—which is both an insecure and painful position for the sheep, and an irksome one for the man, who has to bow much down to clip the lower part of the animal.

* The artist has erroneously represented the sheep lying on its *far* side, and the clipping to proceed from the belly to the back-bone, which is the proper posture for the second position, as also the keeping the head of the sheep down with the left leg *a*, whereas the sheep should have lain upon its *near* side, the wool been shorn from the back-bone to the belly, and the head *d* kept down with the right leg, as described above.