

prevent the grain from being separated from the ear and falling to the ground if we acted differently.

To remedy the want of maturity the oats after cutting are spread on the ground during two or three days or more according to time and places.—The object of this process is to cause the grain to swell, to give it a better grain and thereby give it the necessary volume to increase its quantity *when measured*, but the grain for all that is neither drier nor more wholesome, on the contrary. What we have said with respect to hay, finds its place here, and more than a farmer has lost a fine horse whose death was caused by colics or indigestion, in order to make a few shillings by increasing the bulk of oats which were neither dry nor ripe.

May this short article, written in the style of simple conversation, without any pretention to appear didactic because it is principally addressed to interested readers and little inclined to seek the main point of things under the forms which cover them, merit for its author enough of sympathy to engage him to take the pen in the next number.

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The philosophy of sheep-washing.

The "philosophy," of a thing is the reason why it is so. One who understands why a thing is so, will be likely to do the work connected with it better than if he were ignorant of its theory. Now, in regard to washing sheep, many persons, doubtless, suppose that the water acts simply to dissolve the dirt in the fleece, and by its mechanical action to separate it from the fibre. This it does, to be sure, and this would be

a sufficient reason for washing the sheep, if the water did nothing else. But this is really the smallest part of what good sheep-washing does. You have, perhaps, noticed, on the finer-woolled sheep especially, a yellow exudation near the skin. You will see it nearly all over good sheep, but most on the breast and shoulders. Now, this is a secretion from the glands of the skin, and serves, it is supposed, an important purpose in refining the fibre, and protecting the animal. But the fact about it which has most to do with sheep-washing is the following:—This yellow gum called "yolk," from its resemblance to the yolk of an egg, is largely composed of potash and oil. It is, in short, a sort of naturally formed soap, which, when the sheep is plunged in the water, is dissolved, and acts as a powerful cleanser of the whole fleece. It is as if fine soft soap had been intimately mixed with the fleece down to the very skin, just before washing the sheep. The owner of sheep, who keeps this fact in mind, will see the importance of several things, which we will mention. 1. He will do well to wet the sheep and let them stand a little while before he washes them thoroughly. This will allow the soap of the yolk to act freely. 2. If he can wash his sheep in clear soft water, this will be better than hard water. 3. He will find it good for this, as well as for other reasons, to wait till the weather and water are mild, for the soap acts better thus than if the water is very cold. 4. He will see the importance of sheltering the flock from long and severe rains. These dissolve the yolk, and lower the quality of wool, besides chilling and weakening the sheep themselves.
