

let us look for the cause of the decline of sheep under the circumstances mentioned. When a man turns his attention to keeping sheep, from other branches of agriculture, he is very apt to go all to that branch. Of consequence, he ploughs but little, finding, as his stock of sheep increases, that he needs more of his land in grass, until his fields are nearly all converted into sheep pastures, and in that condition they remain for years. The natural consequence of this is, that the good and wholesome grasses, such as timothy and red clover, die out, and their place is supplied with those kinds that are not so wholesome, such as "June grass," "blue grass," &c.;—and, in addition to this, the sheep often run over it and leave their dung upon it to moulder upon the top of the soil, through and among which the grass grows luxuriantly, undisturbed by the sheep, if they can sustain life without it by feeding upon those places upon which their dung has not been so plentifully strewn, until they are most, and sometimes quite, gnaw the grass out by the root; when, in other places in the same field, the grass is growing luxuriantly, and the owner, seeing it, thinks his sheep are in good pasture, until hunger forces them to eat from the luxuriant grass, which sickens them, gives them the scours and other diseases, and many of them die—some by lingering a week after they are unable to stand—so, at length, he comes to the conclusion that it is best to change his sheep, for they have been upon one farm long enough or too long; which is sorrowfully the case, unless they had better fare.

Now the remedy is here; do not over-stock, but keep a due proportion of all kinds of farm stock. To 200 sheep keep ten cows, six or eight head of horses, and fifteen or twenty hogs. For to support such a proportion of farm stock as this, it will be needful to plough about one-half of the farm every year, and changing with a proper rotation of crops; timothy and clover will be newly set in each field once every four years, which will keep the pastures healthy for sheep; and as many of the older ones sold as lambs raised each year, with a prudent cross from bucks of other families of sheep, will keep a change as regular and certain as the turning of a wheel, and my word for it, the sheep will need no other charge, if they have a good shepherd, and but little medicine. Not that I wish to be understood that sheep so kept are not liable to sickness or death; but that they are not as likely to get into a declining, unhealthy condition, as when kept upon pastures that have long had sheep upon them without being ploughed. * * * * * I winter my sheep by selecting from the flock the small lambs, the old ewes that appear a little on the decline, and the choice bucks, and give them a little wheat bran, mixed with threshed oats or corn meal, and sometimes a little oil-cake. The balance of the flock, as well as those selected, I feed with corn fodder, when there is snow upon the ground, so that they will eat it; but when the ground is bare and the weather moderate, they will do without any coarse food, if the grass in the fields is not too closely eat off. I have never sheltered my sheep, only in cases of winter lambs, except a few I now have, to keep them safe from dogs.

BLANKETS FOR SHEEP.

A writer in a late number of the *London Agricultural Gazette*, says "we find on examining our mortality tables for the last twelve months, that out of 600 Cheviot and black faced Ewehogs, the number of deaths has been but 16. Be it remembered, also, that with the exception of about a score, none of these ever tasted a turnip, but fared with the ewes on the hill. Since we commenced the use of jackets (small

blankets) we have especially noticed an extraordinary diminution of the cases of 'sturdy,' or water in the head. Hydatids in the brain are generally understood to be induced by long continued heavy rains, cold winds, and general privation. Any one conversant with sheep must have observed the wool along the back parts in such a way as fully to expose the skin. The connexion between the spine and the brain is obvious, and it cannot be wondered that hydatids (little sacks filled with water) should be formed in the brains of sheep much exposed to severe storms without due shelter. Hence the advantages of covering their backs with some material which will protect them in a great measure from the chilling effects of wind and rain. The material used is woollen, the size being 23 inches by 15. We lately purchased some coarse blankets that made excellent covers, each jacket costing fourpence. The rams were put with the ewes on the 22d November; and we allow 45 to each male."

The above remarks from a flock-master of large experience in reference to the cause of hydatids, or what we should call water in the brains of sheep, are interesting in a medical and physiological point of view. We know one breeder in Vermont who covers the back of each sheep with a half yard of common sheeting, painted to shed rain. The practice is founded in reason, and is likely to extend—literally making cotton tributary to the production of wool. The growers of the former staple will not object if every sheep in the United States and Europe has a cotton "jacket;" for one that will answer every intention can be made cheaper of cotton than of wool. The comfort of domestic animals at the South is sadly, and most expensively neglected.—*Southern Cultivator*.

FARMING IN IRELAND.—An association of English capitalists, comprising several Railway Contractors, has been formed, for the purpose of purchasing land in Ireland, and reselling or letting it in farms, thoroughly drained, fenced and otherwise fitted for cultivation on the English model. Many estates are now selling in Ireland at from 10 to 12 years purchase; the result, it is confidently believed, must be highly beneficial to that country.

DIMINUTION OF THE WHEAT CROP.—The *Journal of Agriculture* states that 12½ bushels of wheat per acre is the present average of the State of New York; that of Ohio being 15 bushels. Thirty years since the former averaged 30 bushels, and the latter 35 bushels per acre. This result is attributed chiefly to the carrying off phosphate of lime from the soil by repeated wheat crops, without any renewal of that indispensable ingredient. In some sections of Upper Canada the same effects are observable, only as yet in a lesser degree.

MICE IN BARNS.—A correspondent of the *Rural New Yorker* observes that hay-mows having Spearmint in them were free from rats and mice, while other parts of the barn were much infested; and that a waggon-load of mint scattered through the grain, effectually prevents these depredations.

EFFECTS OF PEAT CHARCOAL IN PRESERVING POTATOES.—The *Farmer's Herald* states that in putting a quantity of potatoes in the ordinary way, a small quantity of peat charcoal was strewn over the tubers in one of the pits; and on opening it the potatoes were quite sound, while in the other pits two thirds were quite rotted. All the other circumstances being alike, the difference in the result is attributed to the sole action of the charcoal.