



A Canadian Sheep-shearing Scene.

(Photo by R. R. Sallows.)

with the head. Viewed from behind, we see straight hind legs, well covered with clear wool to the hoofs. He has a full twist, well let down, and carries a full leg of mutton. The back is even, wide at the loin, well-fleshed, and in all its curves shows symmetry, and goodly proportions in all its parts. We open the fleece, and find it to be of good length of staple, fine in quality, and uniform throughout, and shears 12 to 15 lbs. The skin is of a bright cherry color. Taking him all in all, we conclude he is the right kind to use, if the breeding of his progenitors is proper, no matter whether he has crossed the Atlantic or was dropped on our famous Canadian soil.

The ewe, in many respects, such as wooling, covering, coloring, and fleshing qualities, should be much of a similar type. But we want, as a rule, a sweet, feminine face, gentle eye, a larger head, and a moderate length of neck, all indicating a good milker. A compact, well-knit frame is wanted in the ram, but not so in the ewe. The ewe should be built on more of a roomy pattern, if such an expression may be used. The exception to sweetness of face in ewes is when a breeder may wish to furnish high-class and prepotent rams to his customers. In that case, stronger built ewes, and of a masculine appearance, will probably give better results, but they would not win in present-day show-rings. Before visiting Andrew Mansell, in England, many years ago, a friend gave a gentle hint as to the possible disappointment which might be in store in trying to secure a selection of a few shearing ewes. And, sure enough, the flock appeared wanting in that sweetness of form and expression pictured beforehand in anticipation. But see the results. No other breeder ever approached Mr. Mansell as a breeder of rams which made so high a mark wherever used. The five ewes bought for Fairview Farm—not one of them a show ewe—were excellent breeders, and proved to our satisfaction that ram-breeding is an art quite different from the ordinary lines of general pure-breeding.

Twenty-eight years ago the writer invested some hard-earned savings in Shropshires, starting with five ewes and a half-interest in a ram. From the first the venture proved profitable, and now, with all the experience of the many long years, the conclusion is—and very clear and decided, at that—that were another start to be made in life's work on a Canadian farm, Shropshire sheep would most assuredly form a large part of the live stock to be carried. The reasons why may be summed up in this sentence: Because they have been more profitable than all else together on the farm the past twenty or more years.

Manitoba Sheep Sales.

We are just advised that it is the intention of the Sheep-breeders' Association of Manitoba to hold two or three auction sales this fall of sheep in the West, the intention being to secure a majority of these sheep from Ontario breeders. We understand that there is a large inquiry for breeding stock in Manitoba at the present time, but the supply is so limited that the Prairie Provinces breeders cannot supply the demand. In view of

the large number of summer fairs that are held in the West, there is no doubt that considerable stock could be sold by our Eastern breeders if they would make a trip to the West.

Sheep Shearing.

While many flock-owners have doubtless shorn most of their sheep unwashed before this date, the probability is that the majority still follow the old-time practice of delaying the work until the weather is warm enough for river washing of the wool on the sheep before shearing. There are some advantages in early shearing, especially in the case of pure-bred sheep intended to be fitted for sale or show. The sheep thrive better in the warm spring weather relieved of their fleeces, and they make a better showing in size and general appearance in the fair and sale season, carrying more wool. Early shearing is not always safe in the case of breeding ewes in thin condition, but well-fed flocks may generally be safely shorn much earlier than river water is warm enough for washing the sheep. On the other hand, there is to be

considered the undue discrepancy in the price paid by Canadian dealers for unwashed wool, as compared with that for washed wool, a discrimination which is difficult to account for, in view of the small amount of dirt removed from the fleece from a perfunctory washing of a few minutes in cold water, in many cases amounting to little more than a swimming bath.

When sheep are to be river-washed, a warm day in a warm week should be chosen, as, in such case, the water will be at a more comfortable temperature, and safer for the health of both the sheep and the men doing the work. The sheep should be driven slowly to the place of washing, in order that they may not be overheated. They should be carefully led into the water, instead of being forced to jump from the bank of the river or creek. We have known more than one case of sheep dying in the hands of the washer from a forced sudden plunge into the water. The head should be supported above the water, the wool squeezed with the hands to remove as much as possible of the dirt, and the sheep carefully led to a level outlet, and held for a minute to drip and get its breath before being let loose. Avoid, if possible, driving them home over a dusty road, and let a week elapse before shearing, for the rising of the yolk or oily substance exuded from the skin, which adds to the weight of the fleece and facilitates the operation of shearing.

Shearing machines are coming more generally into use where large flocks are kept. They are, we believe, giving satisfaction, and, where flocks of over fifty are kept, will soon pay for their cost, as good hand-shearers are becoming scarce. Whether power machines or shears are used, the mode of procedure is substantially the same. The shearing may be performed on a clean barn floor, on a temporary platform of boards laid upon scantling in the sheep pen, or on a low bench, such as is generally used by shepherds in England.

The common procedure is to set the sheep upon its rump, and, commencing at the jaw, shear down the throat and brisket, then the belly and inside of thighs. Then, commencing again at the jaw, shear down the left side, from throat and belly to the spine, until the tail and buttock on that side is cleared. Then, commencing at the ear on the opposite side, shear from the spine to the breast and belly, ending at the buttock on that side. When the fleece is cleared from the sheep, it is spread upon the floor, bright side down, any tags of dirt present cut off, the outer edges of the fleece turned in, and the fleece rolled up from the tail-end to the neck, when a thumb rope of the wool is twisted into shape and wound tightly around the fleece, and the end tucked safely under the hand.

A Steady Job for the Sow.

That recent record-breaking hog prices in the United States must have been largely due to failure of production to keep pace with increasing demand, is the conclusion of a well-reasoned article in the Farmer, of St. Paul, Minnesota. The effect of high prices, up to a certain point, in tempting a sacrifice of breeding stock, thus accen-



An Old Country Sheep-shearing Scene.

(Photo by W. Reid.)