

introduction of the breed of sheep for which Cotswold has been so famous. A few of these animals were introduced by the care of the queen from Spain, and they had increased to that degree in about half a century, that their wool became the staple riches of England.* If this be true, they doubtless became very much improved upon their introduction to this country, or it is recorded that some 300 years after, Edward IV. gave permission for some to be sent back to Spain. They were originally very coarse animals, with a thick heavy fleece, and well adapted for the bleak, unenclosed Cotswold hills; but since the enclosure of the land and its better cultivation, a great improvement in this class of sheep has taken place; there is little doubt this was effected by the use of the Leicester, which, without diminishing their size, improved their quality, and gave them a greater aptitude to fatten. Among the men to whom this country is indebted for improving this breed were Messrs Charles Large, William Garne, W. Hewer, and C. Barton. To Mr. Robert Garne, the well-known breeder, I am indebted for much of my information. Among other observations, he states, "They are capable of enduring great hardships, succeed well in exposed situations, and on nearly every kind of soil adapted for sheep farming, producing a great amount of mutton and wool at an early age, and it is no unusual thing to see in the best flocks sheep of 16 stone when only 12 months old." In confirmation of this, I saw, when at the Oxford cattle market the second week in March last a pen of shorn tegs of Mr. Gillet's of Astrop weighing quite 16 stones. Mr. Garne also states that "the weight they may be made as old sheep is enormous. He had one at the last Christmas cattle market weighing 43 stones or 86 lbs. per quarter, for which he obtained £8 10s. The average weight of an ordinary flock when fit for the butcher at 14 or 15 months old is from 12 to 13 stones, and the weight of wool of the whole flock would approach to 8 lbs. each. The Cotswolds cut a grand figure and generally form a very attractive portion of the Royal Agricultural Shows; there are between 3000 and 4000 rams annually disposed of, and a good export trade is now carried on with Australia, as well as to the continent. The great demand for them is for crossing, and perhaps it may be considered one of our best sheep for this purpose.

The heavy woolled and large framed Lincoln sheep, like the Cotswold, have been improved by an admixture of Leicester blood.

Mr. J. Clarke, who is well known to many of you, thus speaks of them: "The present improved Lincoln sheep partake largely of the peculiarities of both Cotswold and Leicester, having the expansion of frame and nobility of appearance of the one, with the quality of flesh, compactness of form, beauty of countenance, and propensity to fatten of the other; but they far exceed either in the weight of their fleece. Under good management their wool is of a

quality which rarely fails of obtaining a price equal to that of the lighter long wools, and there is, therefore, no breed perhaps that can equal this in rapidity of growth and propensity to fatten under a skin so weighty and so valuable. There are instances of a most remarkable weight to which these sheep have attained. In 1822 Mr. Dawson, of Witheall, killed a three-shear sheep, weighing 96½ lbs. per quarter; a four-shear, weighing 91 lbs. per quarter; and a shearling, 7½ lbs. per quarter. Mr. Rote Smith, in his report of Lincoln sheep at the Warwick show, states that "he has known months' old lamb-hoggs slaughtered at Lincoln April fair, 30 together, averaging 35 lbs. per quarter, and 100 together clipping 11 lbs. of washed wool each." It is not the common practice for breeders of Lincolns to have the fit for the butcher at 14 or 15 months old, but they are generally kept until they are 22 to 24 months old, when their weight will be from 50 lbs. per quarter, and cut a second fleece weighing from 10 to 14 lbs. The weight of wool of an entire flock, under fair average management, is about 8½ lbs. each; in some cases, especially on good land, this weight no doubt is exceeded. Mr. John Clarke's Lincoln ram clipped 11½ lbs. of wool in three years, an average of 17½ lbs. each year, while a neighbor of his in 1859 clipped 327 hogget fleeces, which weighed altogether 130 tons, an average of 11 lbs. per fleece. The Lincoln breeders consider the mutton of admirable quality, has less fat, and a greater portion of fine grain lean flesh than the Leicester. The ewes good breeders, but, like the Cotswolds and Leicesters, are not good sucklers. Mr. Clarke closes his letter by stating that "it is certain that neither Cotswold nor Leicester sheep, as such, where they have been tried (I suppose that district), have equalled the Lincolns in value of wool and mutton together produced per acre, and no other breed can furnish such a large and heavy skinned lamb hoggs as those are the grazier's attraction at Lincoln, Cambridge and Boston spring fairs. So much for the woolled breeds.

The progress crosses have made is this country is proved by their competition at the Suffolk Club.

Through the kindness of Mr. Brandreth I am enabled to give the return of the Lincoln Prizes were first established for cross-breeds in 1843, now 17 years ago. During the first years, the average number of pens was only 10, but during the last eight years they have averaged within a fraction of 17; while the Leicesters during the first nine years averaged 19, they have during the last eight only reached 17. I do not intend to go into the question of food; for it must be admitted that the woolled breeds will, doubtless, put on the greatest amount of fat in proportion to the food consumed than any other; but this is not what the farmer requires. When he has produced