

dry months. This can be done with great ease on those western plains. Of this I feel assured from my own personal experience. Corn, rape, oats, peas, and other foods may be grown in the finest form. They may be so grown that they can be eaten off by the sheep from time to time, and where a judicious use of the harrow is made the process, while it pushes the sheep on rapidly, also frees the land from weeds, and it leaves the soil in grand condition for growing a crop the next year without having to be plowed. This work has engaged much of my attention since coming west, and I am satisfied that the system will soon be extensively adopted. On June 1st, 1895, we had sheep pasturing on rape which was fully a foot high. It had been sown broadcast. Of course, the season was an unusually early one. But when thus grown rape will afford an immense amount of food in a single season.

The sheep industry, therefore, may be indefinitely extended. Sheep enough may be reared on those western plains to supply, in a great measure, the wants of the British market, and they can be grown in admirable form by those who do the work as it may be done. And then the winters are so admirably adapted to the fattening of sheep. The air is so pure and the skies are so filled with sunshine that disease is almost unknown among sheep in the west when properly cared for.

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Hampshire Downs.

Though the Hampshire Down is one of the modern breeds of British sheep, the origin of the variety is not clearly known. It was formed towards the end of the last century by a number of farmers living in Hampshire, in the endeavor to improve the ancient race of the district. That the Southdown was an important factor in effecting this improvement there cannot be a doubt. Mr. W. C. Spooner, who wrote in 1850, says the original breed of Hampshire sheep was a large, longhorned, blackfaced sheep, with tolerably fine and short wool, hardy, and a good milker. It resembled the old Wiltshire, being unthrifty and coarse in the bone, particularly about the head. He says: "This sheep had probably existed on the downs of Hampshire for ages, and no doubt furnished the principal supply of wool to the manufactory at Winchester established by the Romans. . . . Soon after the improvements in the Sussex sheep were effected the Hampshire farmers used to purchase at the annual sales,

some say, the largest and coarsest animals they could find, and cross them with their native sheep, and also the Berkshire ewe." These crosses were carried on for years until a distinct type of sheep was established. In effecting this change some farmers believed that Leicester blood was employed. The short wool of the old breed has been considerably lengthened, though it is believed at the loss of some of its quality. Mr. Spooner narrates that a Mr. Twynham near Whitchurch, employed rams of a New Leicester-Cotswold cross, and thereby greatly increased the size and weight of fleece, besides hastening the maturity of his sheep.

The Hampshire Downs have always been held in great estimation by British farmers for their hardihood and their early maturity. For raising lambs for market, or for furnishing a good carcass of mutton at an early age, they have no superior. —*Brui, in The Australasian.*

Sheep in Russia.

The management of the flocks in Russia (with the exception of some of the large estates) seems to be in very primitive condition. Owing to the severity of the climate during the winter months, the sheep require a store of fodder to carry them over the time while the snow is on the ground. This is very rarely done, and when any provision is made for feeding the flock the fodder is invariably of the most coarse and innutritious character. The nomads who own a large proportion of the sheep wander from the winter to the summer pastures at stated intervals. Every winter the pastures are covered with snow, and when this is frozen hard the stock die in large numbers from starvation. On the farms all that the sheep get is a little dry straw. During the summer the stock are not much better off, for the heat dries up the pastures and water is often very scarce. A great drawback to the industry is the want of established markets. In the west, where good markets are available, a better system of sheep husbandry prevails, but over the eastern and central portion of the country the outlet for surplus stock is very uncertain. The nomadic population of the south-eastern portion of the country, though they make their living by their flocks and herds, are singularly improvident, and as a result they lose large numbers of sheep and cattle in a severe winter. With a better system of management there is no doubt that the number of sheep and cattle in European Russia could be enormously increased, and most of the breeds could be improved by the introduction of good stock from other countries.