

## Stock Department.

## The Lincoln Sheep.

Among the characteristic breeds of long woolled sheep, the Lincoln has occupied a prominent place from a very early period of English husbandry. The long wools are essentially the sheep of the rich alluvial plains, or marshes, that cover extensive areas along the eastern wastes of England. Accordingly we find that the low grounds of Lincolnshire and adjacent counties have been distinguished, from a very remote period, for a remarkable race of coarse and massive sheep. An old writer described them as "the largest legged and largest carcassed sheep of all others; and although their legs and bellies were for the most part void of wool, yet they carried more wool than any sheep whatsoever." These animals were of immense size, slow feeders, bones coarse, and the mutton of inferior quality. Their chief merit was their fleece which would weigh from 10 to 15 lbs., with a staple 12 to 20 inches long; the wool in some instances literally reaching to the ground.\* For many years there was a keen rivalry kept up between the most distinguished breeders of the Lincoln and Leicester sheep. Subsequently, however, when the new Leicester or Dishley breed of Bakewell attained a fixed popularity, the Lincolnshire breeders resorted to this stock as the means of communicating to their own the property of early fattening and better symmetry, for which the new breed had become highly distinguished. This system of crossing was carried on with most distinguished success, until the close of the last century, and it has been more or less continued ever since, with marked success, till the original type of the old Lincoln may be pronounced extinct.

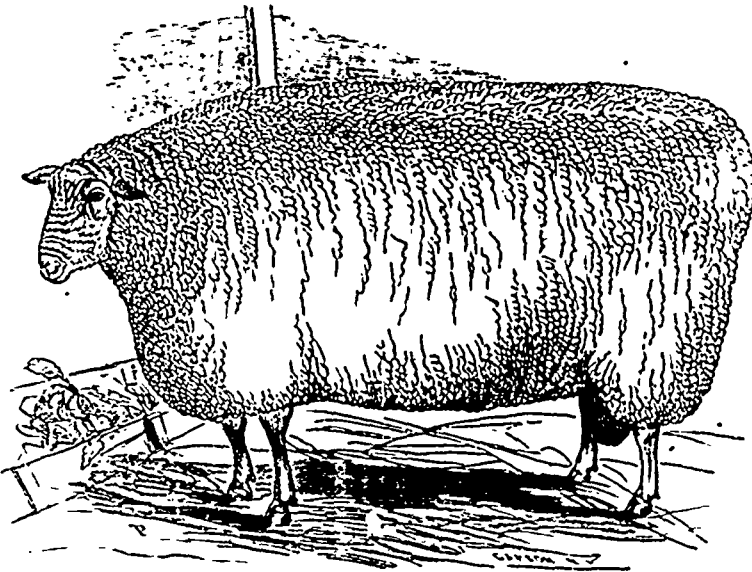
It is to be observed that the crossing of the old Lincoln with the Dishley (new Leicester) blood, met at first very formidable opposition, as often happens to all great and earnest attempts at improvement, and a long controversy was kept up between the supporters of the respective breeds. The harshness and immense carcass of the old breed, and their peculiar adaptation to rich, low-lying pastures, with their unrivalled fleece, were stoutly contested against the claims put forward of earlier maturity, and adaptation to fatten of the new breed. In the end, however, it was found that, as regards the fleece even, though the weight of individual fleeces was diminished by the cross, the wool produced out of the one was increased, from the greater number of animals affording a superior quality of meat that would be maintained on the same space. Thus, by degrees, the remarkable old race of the fens was displaced, or mixed largely in blood with the new variety.

A few remarks of Professor Low, in this connection, are well deserving of attention: "The breeders of Lincolnshire doubtless consulted their immediate interests, in availing themselves of the improved stock of Bakewell, to give at once those qualities to their own in which it was deficient; but at the same time, great regret may now be entertained, that the native breed had not rather been improved by an application of the principle of *selection*, than destroyed in its distinctive characters by indiscriminate crossing. The wool of the true old Lincoln breed was altogether

peculiar, and such as no country in Europe produced. That of the new Leicester breed is shorter and finer; but it wants the toughness, softness and length of fibre which distinguished the others, and which, could it now be obtained, could be used with great advantage in various worsted manufactures. It cannot be doubted, that the same principles of breeding which enabled Mr. Bakewell to form a new breed, could have been applied by the Lincolnshire breeders to remove the defects of the native race, and call forth its useful purposes."

Since the above extract was written, further improvements have been made on the Lincoln sheep that go to enhance the value both of the carcass and the fleece, and to give them more of a fixed character as a large and long-wooled breed, so that it has become a matter not merely of private concern, but of national importance even, that the modern Lincoln should not only be mentioned as a *breed*, but as far as practicable it should be still further improved. Its flock now ranks at least on an equality with that of any of the larger breeds; and its wool continues unrivalled for combing purposes, possessing a bright silky appearance of staple, peculiarly adapted for what are termed "lustre" goods, in imitation of alpaca and mohair fabrics, and thus its value of late has been considerably advanced.

With respect to the present state of this valuable



breed, Mr. J. Algernon Clarke, a distinguished sheep breeder, remarks: "The present improved Lincoln sheep partakes largely of the peculiarities of both Cotswold and Leicesters, 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 the 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."

In looking over recent reports on British sheep, we have been struck by a number of remarkable facts in relation to the modern Lincoln. So long ago as 1826, Mr. Dawson, of Withcote, killed a three shear sheep, weighing 96½ lbs. per quarter; a two shear, weighing 91 lbs. per quarter, and a shearling, 71 lbs. per quarter. Mr. Robert Smith, in his report of the Royal Show at Warwick, some half dozen years ago, states that "he has known 14th months old lamb-hoggs slaughtered at Lincoln April fair, thirty together, averaging 37 lbs. per quarter, and one hundred together, clipping 14 lbs. of washed wool each." It is not the common practice of the breeders of Lincolns to have them fit for the butchers at 14 or 15 months old; but they are generally kept until they are 22 to

28 months old, when their weight will be, on ordinary feeding, from 30 to 40 lbs. per quarter, and cut a second fleece, weighing from 10 to 14 lbs. Mr. John Clarke's Lincoln prize ram clipped 51½ lbs. of wool in three years, an average of 17½ lbs. each year; while a neighbour of his, in 1859, clipped 327 hogget fleeces, which weighed altogether 130 tons, an average of over 11 lbs. per fleece. The Lincoln breeders consider the mutton of admirable quality, having less fat and a greater portion of fine-grained, lean flesh, than the Leicester. The ewes are good breeders, but are said, like the Cotswolds and Leicesters, not to be good sucklers. Mr. Clarke further observes that "it is certain that neither Cotswold nor Leicester sheep, in cases where they have been tried in the same district, have excelled the Lincolns in the value of wool and mutton together produced per acre; and no other breed can furnish such big and heavy-skinned lamb hoggs as those which are the graziers' attraction at Lincoln, Caistor, and Boston spring fairs."

Our engraving represents a shearling ram imported last year from a well-known Lincoln flock, by Mr. Kirby, of Milton, county of Dalton, tenant of John White, Esq., M.P.P. We had the pleasure of seeing the importation, consisting of nine rams, which taken as a whole, for size, fineness of breeding, symmetry, constitution, weight and quality of wool could hardly be surpassed. This breed is richly deserving a fair trial in Canada, and the public is much indebted to Mr. Kirby, and his enterprising landlord, and we shall be pleased to hear that they will import some ewes of the pure Lincoln blood the present year. The rams, which have already been dispersed, will, no doubt, do good service among a number of our flocks.

**LARGE SALE OF MULES.**—Mr. J. Buckalew, of Jamesburg, N. J., recently sold a lot of 500 mules to the Delaware & Baritan Canal Company, receiving a cheque for \$90,000 in payment therefor. The *Country Gentleman* rather intimates a doubt whether any sale of equal amount has been made by Western farmers. We hope some of our readers will enable us to gratify the anxiety of that paper to chronicle such an event in the West. Mr. B. is finishing a cranberry bog of 150 acres. We can gratify the desire of our cotemporary to know of anything in the West equalling this by referring it to a farm of 100,000 acres in Barry county, Mich., which is being prepared for the culture of cranberries.—*Western Rural*.

## Breeding Horses vs. Breeding Pigs.

Mr. Thomas Robertson, of Narragmore, Kildare, Ireland, discusses in the *Irish Farmers' Gazette* the relative profits derived from breeding horses as compared with breeding pigs, and gives the preference very decidedly to the latter. With regard to the former, he remarks on the length of time the farmer has to keep the animal before he can make a sale, the expense of the keep of both mare and foal, the risk to which they are exposed, and the uncertainty attending the price at last obtained, pointing out that in many instances, as the trade is carried on in Ireland, the dealer, and not the breeder, makes all the profit in the transaction. So uncertain is the business there, that he even goes so far as to characterize it by the name of "gambling." In contrast with this denunciation, he pronounces a brood sow to be a much more profitable animal to the farmer than even a first class brood mare. The original cost of the stock is less, the return is much more speedy, can be secured, if desired, as often as twice in the year, and is altogether, in his opinion, attended with much

\* Mr. Colley, an eminent breeder, thus describes the old Lincoln: "They are without horns, have white faces, and long, thin, weak carcasses; the ewes weighing from 14 to 20 lbs. the quarter. They have thick, ugly, white legs, large bones, thick fells, and long wool, averaging from 10 to 18 inches, weighing from 10 to 16 lbs. per fleece, and being a slow feeding and coarse-grained carcass of mutton."