

the downs of Sussex, but being possessed, like Bakewell, of an intimate knowledge of the physiology of breeding, by a judicious selection of his animals (but what selection it was the world is not acquainted with), he produced an animal with as many good points as its prototype had bad; but their greatest improvement evolved upon a gentleman, a worthy member of this club. I allude to Mr. Jonas Webb, who, regardless of expense, has moulded the sheep to his own views, and made it as regards its shape almost perfect. The peculiar merits of this breed consist in its superior quality of mutton and wool, and I gather from a letter of Mr. Jonas Webb's, in reply to a statement of Mr. Reece's in vol. xiv. of the Royal Agricultural Society's Journal, their average weight at from 3 to 15 months old is about 9 stone, (3 lbs. to the stone) and the weight of the wool of the entire flock about 6 lbs. The ewes are capital breeders, generally producing one-third twins, and are excellent mothers. This breed is, doubtless, best adapted for elevated situations and bare pasturage, where activity is necessary for getting the stomach filled, and where folding is pursued, their activity being in their favour, they are a highly sirable class of sheep; from their gay and antilful appearance they find strong supporters amongst our nobility and amateur farmers, and are considered by them the *élite* of our breeds.

The Hampshire or West County Down is a very important branch of the Down family.

The Sussex Down is the favourite in the eastern counties, and this breed in the western and north-western counties. Again, as the Sussex Downs are descendants of the sheep which formerly occupied those hills, the latter are descendants of those white-faced horned sheep that ranged from a very early period the hills and downs of Wiltshire and Hampshire. Their improvement dates from the commencement of the present century, when recourse was had to the Southdown; from successive crosses this very valuable class of sheep was established, and I think it will be generally admitted that a flock of Hampshire Downs now presents as great a formity in wool, colour, and general appearance as their smaller but handsomer cousins, the Southdowns. They have lately rapidly risen in the estimation, and find considerable favour in the London markets; but it is said by some, (what truth I know not) that, like the Longwethers, who are fond of them, they have rather little appetites. A gentleman who stands high in the successful exhibition of this class of sheep at our national shows, in reply to my inquiries, says that "they are the best description of sheep for Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Hampshire; in fact, the large sheep fairs, such as Overton, Reading, Wilton, Illey, and Weyhill are supplied with very little stock of any other sort; they are very hardy and of good constitutions, and wool bearers (the average weight of a well grown flock is from 6 to 7 lbs. each fleece), of early maturity, and have plenty of lean as well

as fat meat; they will graze to almost any weight you may think proper to make them." The same gentleman also states "that they have been very much improved the last few years by a slight cross with the Southdown." Another gentleman, not a breeder of Hampshires, but who has had considerable experience in the feeding of them, states that they are a good, useful sheep; the better bred ones will bear comparison with other breeds, but there are some not to be desired; those that are too large are very slow in feeding, and when fat are of second quality," and in his opinion "it is very easy to get a Hampshire too big." The ewes are good breeders and sucklers, and combined with the excellent management they receive in these counties, some most extraordinary lambs are raised, which at barely eight months old command enormous prices at their autumn fairs. Their draft ewes also find a ready sale, and are distributed throughout many parts of England, chiefly with a view to cross with the Cotswold or other long-woolled rams; but the former is more commonly used, and I have seen some very wonderful lambs the result of this cross. So much for the short-woolled sheep.

There is no reliable information as to the course pursued in establishing the Leicester sheep.

Bakewell died, and his secret was buried with him; but there is very little doubt they are the result of a cross of the various long-woolled breeds in his own immediate locality, and which he succeeded in turning to good account by the production of this valuable breed of sheep; for it cannot be denied that to this animal all other long-woolled sheep, and perhaps some others, are indebted for their improved shape and great disposition to fatten. These sheep have been so long before the public, and their qualities are so well known, that I shall not occupy your time with any lengthened remarks upon them; their chief characteristics are aptitude to fatten, with a comparatively small consumption of food, and early maturity; they cut a good fleece of wool, upon an average of 7 lbs. each, and weigh at 14 or 15 months old from 9 to 10 stones each. Some friends of mine in our own county, who have been very successful exhibitors at the Smithfield Club show in this class, regret that they cannot be considered good breeders or sucklers—it is a rare thing to have more lambs than there are ewes put to the ram; they also inform me that they find some difficulty in satisfactorily disposing of them when fat, as the public taste shows a decided preference for a black leg and a dark face.

The Cotswold or Gloucester sheep is one of the oldest of our breeds.

Mention is made of them in the early history of this country, and Miss Strickland says in her "Lives of the Queens of England," vol. i., page 449, "that there is little more than tradition to support the assertion that to Eleanora of Castile," Queen of Henry II., "England owes the