

earliest nomadic times. Size would, therefore, be a desideratum. Warmth and comfort would be desired. Length and fineness of fleece would, therefore, be sought for. Purity of colour would be appreciated. White, and its pure and uniform tints, would be desired. Principles of economy would dictate considerations as to weight, strength, and healthiness of skin and so forth.

#### THE FIRST EXPERIMENT.

Early in the history of the world it can be well imagined that wealth was measured by sheep. And the dignity of shepherding and the peace of pastoral pursuits bulk largely in ancient literature. The flocks of Abraham and Lot, as the measure of their prosperity, are said to have been more than the land could support. They were the chief resources as well as the spoils of the whole history and the wars of the Israelites. Solomon dedicated 120,000 sheep to the purposes of religion and the temple. Pliny remarks that sheep were used as sacrifices to the gods, as well as for food and clothing. The enormous superfluity of the flocks of ancient times must have been the product of careful selection; and it will be remembered that the first successful experiment for the production of a new colour was made by Jacob, as recorded in the Scriptures. He peeled rods of poplar, hazel and chestnut, so as to give them a "ring-streaked" or dark and white appearance. These he placed in the water troughs of the flocks. In this he supposed according to the world-old tradition that the speckled appearance would be reproduced in the young lambs through the impressionable character of the ewes carrying young. White troughs have since been used, and even white cloths have been hung up in the fields for the same purpose.

#### WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

The original stock of domestic sheep is represented by, and more or less obscurely traceable to, less than a dozen wild species. These vary in outward appearance and character, considerably from the goat-like, furry rather than fleecy, blue sheep of Tibet, to the Moufflon or Armenian wild sheep of Europe. The latter is said to be the original progenitor of our domestic varieties. They formerly existed in the islands of Sardinia and Corsica in large numbers, and were the object of large organized hunts, as many as 500 being shot in a single drive. To-day they are not so numerous, and the captured are much less. Their affinity with domestic sheep is seen in the fact that now and then the wild Moufflon will forsake the wilds and mix with the homestead sheep, while it is also known that orphan lambs of the home-