Sheep Husbandry.

Leicester Sheep.

THE following remarks we take from a communication of Mr. Thomas Robertson, a successful Border breeder, in Scotland, that appeared in a recent number of the *North British Agriculturist*. They are more or less applicable to what are called Leicester sheep in Canada; a breed with us rarely found pure, and admitting of very great improvements. With respect to what is said about bare legs, bellies and heads, so often seen, it is matter for grave consideration in a climate like ours, and our readers will find the statements and suggestions of Mr. Robertson well deserving of attention:—

"These fine sheep have already great size, with a propensity to early maturity; but one of their great deficiences is want of wool, and of the right sort. Not only is the wool in most instances grown upon the Borders too close set—too muffy, if I may use the word—but the animals in too many instances have their bellies, fore-arms, and inside thighs uncovered. Why should this be, or why should the very superior intelligence in the flockmasters upon the Borders be unequal to the task of breeding sheep with the fine, open, purly fleece so indicative of superior quality? This is the sort of wool that now-a-days is in most request, and therefore commands the highest price; and all flockmasters should set themselves to acquire it in their flocks. We see also in animals possessing this sort of fleece there is not only a remarkable propensity to acquire flesh, but at the same time an absence of bare bellies, of bare fore-arms and thighs, and instead you have a pure Leicester sheep thoroughly well covered with the most valuable kind of wool. This reform in breeding could be easily introduced upon the Borders and in Scotland generally, by careful selection of tups; and by that means, and perhaps in some instances by a little more generous treatment, a much heavier and more valuable crop of wool would be shorn annually than there is at present, probably to the tune of 7*s*. 6*d*. a head.

"There is also, as I have already pointed out, a very great error committed in many instances upon the Borders, in using tall, long-legged, or what are called up-standing sheep; and I must respectfully say, that in acting upon such an idea there is neither sense nor reason. Has any breeder or feeder failed to observe that in fattening out cattle for the butcher, the long-legged ones are the latest in finishing, and bring the least money when sold? Now, the same rule holds in regard to sheep, and so I have no hesitation in telling those breeders who choose high, up-standing rams for their ewes, that they are directly and wilfully breeding an inferior kind of animal.

"Then take the long-legs in connection with the hard handling and bad quality which you almost invariably find as an accompaniment. So surely is this the case as a rule, that in looking over the many pens of rams exhibited at Kelso, I have latterly from experience, never almost in a single instance, thought it worth my while to handle such sort of animals; and when I have departed from the rule, either to please a friend or satisfy my curiosity, I have invariably found the high animal and the hard back together. I know the idea is that a high, up-standing ram is the most suitable for using to half-bred Cheviot or Blackfaced ewes, but such is an utter fallacy, and contrary to every right principle in breeding for improvement. It has been proved over and over again that the first requisite in breeding whether pure or cross animals, is quality in the male. Get vigour, size, or roominess in the female to any possible extent, but above all get quality in the male, and in this way rapid improvement may be looked for. In a sheep especially a fat back is an indication of quality, and this point I would respectfully commend to all breeders of tups on the Borders, as the very first thing to be desired. In short, I would reject the finest looking ram which was deficient in quality or in width of chest, both before and underneath.

"In addition to a large fleece of purly wool, good handling quality, short legs, and great substance, there should be in a male especially, good shoulders—that is, shoulders well laid on to his ribs, for no animal can travel properly with clumsy, upright shoulder-blades, nor will a coarse, ill-made shoulder be easily or properly covered with flesh; and also a strong, muscular neck, running nicely into his head, which should be well carried and handsome, and well woolled up to his jaws and skull. A muscular neck, with a full neck vein, as it is termed, are indications of health and condition, and should be invariably looked for in choosing a ram.

"My only apology for reiterating these views through your columns is a sense of their importance, and the certainty that their adoption generally would quickly effect a great advance in many respects in the further improvement of what is no doubt already a most valuable breed of sheep; and in corroboration of my views, I may remind those of your readers who recently visited the showyards of Newcastle and Stirling, that the successful "Border Leicesters" on both occasions were (when exhibited in the respective classes) sheep of the kind and class which I have endeavoured, however imperfectly, to describe, viz., compact, yet large, woolly sheep, on short legs and of good quality, or, in other words, true Leicesters."

CABBAGES AND APPLES FOR SHEEP.—J. R., of Buffalo, N. Y., is informed that cabbages and apples, (particularly sweet ones), given daily in moderate quantities, are usually regarded as highly beneficial fall and winter feed for sheep. Our friend Thomas Gorby, of Ohio—a highly experienced and skilful flockmaster—is of the opinion, however, that feeding a portion of his breeding ewes freely with sweet apples, last winter, caused them to bring forth uncommonly small, weak lambs, most of which perished. At all events his ewes so fed produced such lambs, while those fed differently produced good, strong lambs Will others who have fed their breeding ewes sweet apples, apprise us of the result?—*Rural New Yorker.*

The Apiary.

Taming Bees.

BY skillfully operating upon the five senses of the bee, viz: seeing, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, they can be subjected to the control and will of the bee master. An entire swarm can be tamed in two minutes, so that they can be handled fearless of their defensive weapon

Reason teaches us that they should be carefully handled, avoiding all jostling or pressure. Man himself, when abused or roughly handled, is not free from a feeling of resistance, or quick defence. Why should bees, then, armed defensively by nature, not retort, when under a sense of pain or restriction, caused by an attack on themselves or their possessions?

One rule bears thoughtfulness—never manifest *fear* while operating with them. Whatever is attempted, let no cowardice be witnessed by the bees; avoid all offensive motions of the body, such as striking or attempting to disperse those surrounding your person—you may imagine that their intention when they swarm around you is to sting you, when really they do not mean to do so.

By no means let a "panic" seize you, and a retreat be sounded; let their buzzing arm your confidence, stand firm; they will not sting until the "buzz" is reduced to a finer note, when, by looking steadily on the ground with the head bowed down, or putting your face in shrubbery, they will soon leave you. But should you decide on a hasty retreat, let it be done only as a "military necessity." Change your "base" quickly, and fall back silently, that the attacking party may be ignorant of your designs. In case the bee-keeper should excite his bees, and they become cross and ungovernable, it is then advisable for him, as a precautionary measure, to make use of a bee-protector or head-dress.—*Nature's Bee Book.*

AN AMERICAN BEE KING.—I have just returned, writes M. M. Baldridge, (a well-known American writer on bees), from the State Fair at Decatur. One of the "curiosities" on exhibition at the fair was an individual from Ohio—by some denominated the "Bee King!" He fooled the people out of several hundred dollars with some stuff he called "bee-charm!" He had a small swarm of bees in his cap, and tried to make the people believe that he could call bees out the woods back home, in case they should decamp after swarming. I told the people that he had the queen in his cap, which was found to be true. He kept her in a wire cage, which was concealed under some fringe. His cap was made for the business. He understands the trade admirably of catching "gudgeons!" How strange that old bee-keepers should be so easily duped.

TO DESTROY BEE MOTHS.—Take a pan of oil or grease at the time the miller is ready to begin to lay its eggs, and insert a wick in the middle of it, and light about dark, set it near your bee-hives, and the millers will be attracted to the light, and being blinded by it, will readily drop in the grease and die.

Entomology.

Destruction of Insects Injurious to Vegetation.

THE increase of insects which prey upon field and garden crops in some sections of the country is a source of constant solicitude to the farmer. In spite of all his efforts to destroy them, they increase in numbers from year to year, and dispute with him the products of his soil. The fact has been noticed by almost all observing farmers that upon new ground there is always the greatest exemption from the ravages of the vermin which are destructive to vegetable life. For instance, the black bug upon squashes, the onion worm, the Hessian fly, the chintz bug, and many other insect pests, seem to increase in number from year to year, and frequently defy all efforts for their extermination. It is known that the black squash bug spends the winter in a torpid state, in the holes of fences and stone walls, and in very close proximity to his summer feeding grounds, and that he comes forth full fledged to renew his work of destruction upon the tender vines early in the ensuing summer. The eggs of many other insects are deposited in the straw or on the ground, which has furnished the parents with food and lodging during the summer, so that when hatched by the warmth of the season, the young may find their appropriate food close at hand. Thus, the longer a piece of ground is cultivated with any particular crop, so much the more numerous will be the insects which prey upon it; for all the conditions being favourable, they multiply in compound proportion the longer the system continues. Especially is this the case upon those fields where a regular rotation is not considered necessary to success. This fact would seem to suggest that a change of the crop would prove very advantageous in all cases. Thus, when a piece of land that has been allotted to onions for several successive years becomes unreliable by reason of the depredations of the maggot, the readiest way to clean it would seem to be to cultivate some other crop, one not at all adapted to the taste of the insects which occupy the ground. We think our onion-raising friends in Marblehead, Danvers and elsewhere, would have far less reason to complain of the ravages of the worm if they should occasionally alternate their onion fields with tobacco; for which crop the lands would be generally found in most excellent condition. Though possessed of a very strong stomach, it is doubtful if an onion worm would sustain life by chewing tobacco; and of course the larvæ of innumerable multitudes would be hatched only to perish for want of proper food.

This view of the case finds ample confirmation in the results of thorough investigation in Europe, from a statement of which the wheat cultivators of the West, whose crops are becoming more and more uncertain every year in consequence of the ravages of "the fly," may derive a lesson of especial advantage. In a recent communication by Mr. Olivier, a member of the Institute of France, to the Royal and Central Agricultural Society of Paris, a description was given of all the insects which live upon the crown or collar of the roots of the grain-bearing grasses, such as wheat, rye barley and oats; in which it was shown that "they multiply themselves without end when the same soil presents the same crop for several years in succession, or even crops of analagous species. But when a crop intervenes upon which those insects cannot live, as beans, beets, turnips, after wheat and oats, then the whole race of insects perish from the field for want of proper nourishment;" and the next year the farmer can return his land to the accustomed tillage, without apprehension that the insects will rob him of the proceeds of his toil.

A hint of so much practical importance from such a reliable source ought not to be lost upon farmers and market gardeners of the United States, who reckon as not the least of the difficulties with which they have to contend, the fact that so large a portion of their produce "goes to the bugs" every year in spite of all their efforts to prevent it.—*Maine Farmer.*

CHINCH BUG IN WHEAT.—A. W. PEASE of Salem, Wis., writes the *Rural*:—"To prevent the chinch bug from destroying wheat, at the time of sowing your wheat mix a small quantity of Hungarian grass seed with the wheat and the bug will not interfere with the wheat until they have destroyed all the grass; by that time the wheat will be too forward for them to injure it. The grass will not injure your wheat if no bugs appear. Pigeon grass will answer the same purpose, but when that is once in the land it is not so easy to get rid of it. The Hungarian will not live over winter. Try it."—*Rural New Yorker.*