

or steer die at three or four years old, or the cow before breeding, the loss is almost a total one. If the cost of keeping sheep is fairly estimated, it will be seen that, with prime animals, no other branch of agriculture has yielded better or more uniform returns on the capital invested.

The following have been the average annual prices of New York State fleece wools for the past seven years, per pound, in cents.

| Years.  | Saxony.  | Full blood. |
|---------|----------|-------------|
| 1855-6  | 46 to 50 | 39 to 41    |
| 1856-7  | 53 to 56 | 46 to 49    |
| 1857-8  | 38 to 41 | 33 to 35    |
| 1858-9  | 45 to 50 | 40 to 42    |
| 1859-60 | 50 to 54 | 45 to 47    |
| 1860-1  | 48 to 51 | 43 to 45    |
| 1861-2  | 42 to 46 | 40 to 44    |

The examples of France, Germany, and England all show that vastly higher priced lands than any in New York carry sheep at a profit, and in the two first named countries the wool-producing sheep are preferred to the mutton sheep, though the growers are exposed to the competition of the far cheaper wool-producing lands of Southern Russia and Hungary near by, and of the Cape Colony, South America, and Australia further off.

The production of mutton has been too much disregarded in America as a concomitant of the production of wool. Near large meat markets mutton is the prime consideration, and wool but the accessory; remote from such markets the converse of the proposition is true. But it does not follow in either case that the secondary object is to be unnecessarily neglected. The great body of Americans are neither accustomed to, nor do they choose, excessively fat fresh meats of any kind, particularly mutton. A portion of the population cook and eat mutton as soon as it is killed. Every experienced meat producer knows that a pound of well-fatted mutton can be raised more cheaply than a pound of any other well-fatted meat. The American consumers are discovering that it is as palatable and nutritious as any other kind of animal food, and wastes materially less in cooking than beef. Prime mutton now commands higher prices in the markets of the States than the choicest qualities of beef. Its consumption is rapidly increasing in American cities, and also in small inland local markets, and on farms, because prime lamb and mutton can always be supplied in the latter places, whereas meat from large fat cattle cannot be, unless in cold weather, as such animals make more meat than can be disposed of unsalted in such situations.

The increase in the numbers and in the early maturity of sheep enables England to support a vastly larger population than it possibly could have done 100 years ago. It is hardly too much to say that the continued sustenance of its peo-

ple, and the fertility of its soil, depend upon these animals. England proper, with an area of 51,000 square miles, has upwards of thirty millions of sheep. Without these, its soils could not be maintained in their present productive ness, and its population of 17,000,000 supplied with animal and vegetable food. It is now conceded fact that an equivalent result could not even approximately be obtained by the substitution of any other animals.

The meat of the Merino, when well gathered and properly treated, is juicy, short-grained high colored, and well flavored. In all the particulars American taste adjudges it superior to the meat of the English long-wooled sheep. Professor Wilson states that the Merinos may be fed up to 110 to 120 pounds at two years old. The full-blood Merino produces as good mutton as the ordinary country and western Merino grades of the States, if killed as young and in as good condition. It costs no more proportion to weight of carcass to keep it. Its wool is worth from a third to half more per load. "Wherever, therefore," observes Dr. Randall "it is profitable to grow the common grade sheep, partly for mutton and partly for wool-producing purposes, it is more profitable to rear full-blooded Merinos. In the State of New York we could, by the substitution of fine, heavy fleeces for those now carried by our grade sheep profitably grow 200 per cent. more of mutton in the wool-growing districts than we now do. He also adds, that during the thirty years he has kept Merino sheep the fleeces of his flock have averaged more than 2 dollars a-head per annum and wethers produced fleeces worth about 3 dollars. As on the best lands of the State it now costs about 2 dollars a-head annually to keep Merino sheep, the lambs and manure may be looked to as the gain.

The only change which he considers necessary or desirable to make in the form of the Merino to improve it as a mutton sheep, is the substitution of a wool-bearing sheep, viz., to convert the flocks which now deviate from that standard into low, round, hardy, easily kept sheep. The wethers may, some future day be turned off at two years of age under a system of feeding analogous to that pursued in England, but it is doubtful whether it will be found most profitable. Prime full-blooded ewes will probably in New York never be slaughtered before they are six or seven; indeed, until their number is enormously increased they never will be turned off at any age to the butcher. They have twice or thrice the longevity of the improved English breeds, in which early maturity is indeed the precursor, if not the cause, of an equally early decline. Merino ewes not infrequently raise good lambs at fourteen or fifteen years old, and Dr. Randall was informed that the dam of the once famous "Robinson ram" had a lamb in her twenty-second year.—*Maline Express*.