

King took possession of the reptile, and said he must go and make rain. I laughed at this, and said I did not think he could do so, to which the King replied, "You will see." The python was skinned alive, its liver taken out and cooked, and the usual rainmaking rites performed. Curiously enough, just before sundown the sky clouded over, and soon afterwards one of the heaviest thunderstorms I had ever seen broke over the place. Next morning the King asked me if a white man could make a thunderstorm like that? I said, "No, King; if we could get you down amongst the farmers in the Karoo we could guarantee you a fortune."

Sheep.—Sheep have done well, especially on catch crops, which, as already remarked, are abundant this year. Trifolium and vetches are of vital importance for lambs at this season of the year, and tide over a difficult period. Hampshire and other chalk land farmers would find it impossible to carry on their large flocks without these useful crops. The system of catch crops followed by roots is the most perfect system of arable sheep farming in existence. It enables flockmasters to maintain a stock of sheep during the summer, amounting to between two and three to the acre over the entire farm, besides a dairy of cows and a proportionate number of young stock. It produces a lamb of great size and weight at an early age, on account of the variety and abundance of the food. It is the principal reason why Hampshire Down lambs are ready for use by July. Only this week, June 18th, I weighed ten lambs, selected for their size, which scaled 1,302 lb., or 130.2 lb. each. These lambs were all born within the year, and the average date was taken to be January 15th, to the best of our knowledge. This gave an average daily increase in live weight (deducting 16 lb. for birth weight) of .85 lb. per day, and there can be little doubt that they have been increasing lately at the rate of 1 lb. per day. How far this rapid growth is due to breed cannot be precisely stated. It is, however, a matter of experience that other breeds can produce heavy lambs, but it has yet to be shown that any breed can rival the Hampshire lamb in May. My heaviest lamb, certainly born after January 4th, was 143 lb. weight on the scales, and we estimate his dressed carcase weight at 80 lb. This estimate is arrived at by converting Imperial 14 lb. stones into Smithfield 8 lb. stones, a method likely to be

justified in the case of lambs done particularly well from the day of their birth. It is not likely that a lamb could be brought to this weight out of doors under any other system than that of successive autumn-sown catch crops.

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GARDEN OF THE FARM.

Kitchen Garden.

Asparagus plantations will now be affording a most welcome supply of this toothsome vegetable, that is, where the plants are thoroughly established. It is surprising what a quantity of shoots these throw up, and it is generally not until the early peas are ready for picking that cutting ceases. Even then, so fond are some of asparagus, that they are tempted to continue cutting much later in the season than they should, as, however strong the plants may be, undue or severe cutting will naturally weaken them, and then the following season the "grass" is both smaller and there is less of it. While cutting continues, however, it is best to cut all shoots that appear. To use only the thickest and allow the weak and spindly ones to grow is wrong. Better remove them all, and then the permanent roots are not robbed of moisture and nourishment. Invariably the thin growths are nothing but seedlings springing from the seed shed on the beds the previous autumn. To allow these to grow would only hamper the main plants, and it would be better to pull them up early before their roots strike down and become entangled with those of the permanent occupants. If allowed to increase year after year, the beds become a crowded mass, and then fine "grass" may be looked for in vain. Those who have recently made new beds would be wise not to commence cutting, say, until they are three years old, and then only sparingly. We have in former articles referred to the cultivation of asparagus fully. It has been our endeavour to point out how unnecessary it is to form raised beds in some soils, while it is necessary to do so in others. One of the main things, however, is to allow plenty of room between the plants. Two feet each way is none too much, and had we to plant asparagus by the acre we would set the plants out one yard apart. Even at this distance the roots would soon meet in good soil, and the best "grass" is not produced unless there is