

A WORD FOR THE SHEEP.

The sheep is the cosmopolite among domestic animals. With a habitat extending from Nova Zembla to New Zealand, and following the lines of latitude around the world, it accommodates itself to every surrounding; here sweltering in the heated atmosphere of the tropic pampas, and there shivering before the crisp blasts that fan the mountain's brow; whether in glebe or glen, in field or forest, feeding on grain or grass, it is found fitted to its surrounding conditions, and to unfailingly mete to its owner in the measure from which it has been supplied.

This conspicuous pliability of the sheep has enabled breeders possessed of skill and enterprise to produce varieties suited not alone to the purposes of the pastoral herdsman, but to the average farmer as well. For the latter, whatever his condition and locality, some variety may be found from which he may confidently anticipate the maximum profit for such judicious care and reasonable sustenance as he may accord them.

The crying need of American agriculture to-day is a more general incorporation of the sheep into the farming economy. More prolific than horses or cattle, as well as more tractable, subsisting on scantier herbage, and requiring less supervision, it claims the additional advantage of "paying for its raising" in annual instalments of marketable fleece pending its growth to maturity. It is more readily transferred from one enclosure to another, and is easily restrained by fences which would prove no barrier against the encroachments of other farm stock. Its light tread and love of repose warrant its access to fields and pastures where the tramping of cattle and the tearing of hogs would not be tolerated. It wastes less food in proportion to the quantity consumed, and will hunt out and utilize much that would otherwise be lost to the farmer. Yielding a return in both fleece and flesh, it furnishes its owner the double advantage of catching a good market for his product, requiring less water, and disposed to work for its food, it is without a peer when summer's draught taxes the farmer's resources for enabling his live stock to maintain an average of thrift and flesh.

All that can be said in behalf of feeding live stock on the farm, as distinguished from the soil-impoverishing policy of placing the raw grain and grass on the market, will be found to apply with double emphasis to the farm that carries as part of its outfit one or more sheep per acre. No animal returns more fertility to the soil in proportion to the amount exacted for its support, while none equals it in the evenness with which the droppings are distributed.

Notwithstanding the evident advantages an increase in sheep culture brings to agriculture of a country generally, and especially inuring to the benefit of such farmers as incorporate it into their system, the fact is apparent that sheep are not so numerous, or

so evenly distributed, as they should be. To emphasize the facts in relation to sheep-husbandry—pastoral and mixed—and to leave no doubt on the minds of every consistent inquirer, and to assist those who have been enlisted by intelligent criticism and timely advice, will be among the aims of THE BREEDER'S GAZETTE, and to this end will be invoked the best talent and experience, regardless of labor and expense.