"TEXEL" OR "MOUTON FLANDRIN" SHEEP.

BY WINTHROP W. CHENERY, BELMONT, MASS.

THE production of long, combing or lustrous wool has been for many years fostered by the English government and manufacturers, and especially requires encouraging in this country, where the demand is so great and the supply so scanty. The manufacture and the use of woollens made from coarse wools, as distinguishable from merinos or fine wools, has increased immensely within a few years.

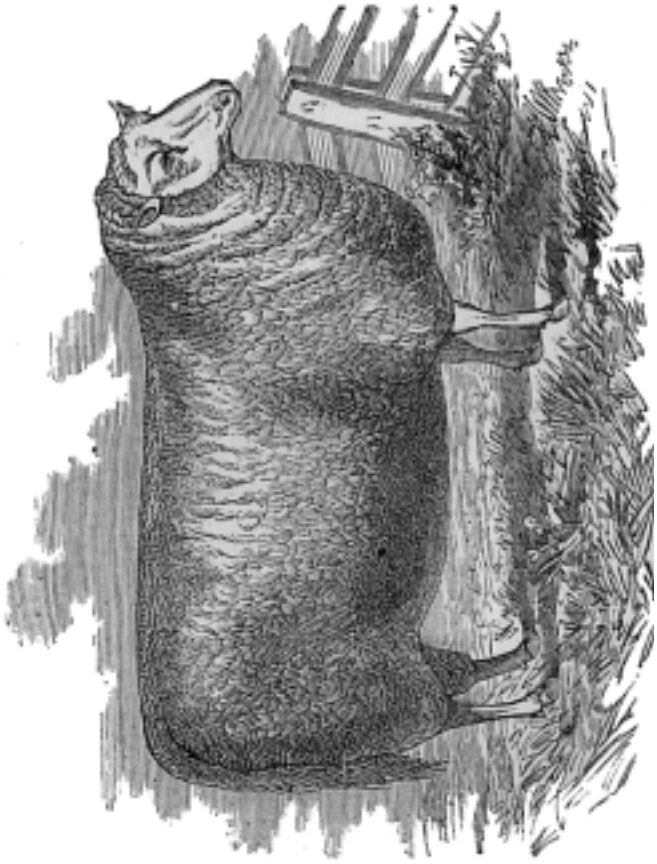
Carpets, bockings, baizes, are more commonly used; so are damasks, moreens, and goods of that description, in upholstery; for men's wear, tweeds and fancy cassimeres of coarse wool have, in ordinary use, superseded broadcloths and fine cassimeres; while, for women's use, crapes, alpacas, merinos, and worsted goods of every description are fashionable, and, of course, much worn.

Indeed, every dry-goods establishment gives sufficient and positive proof of this increasing change in the great variety of fabrics in constant demand made from wool of this description.

A comparatively small amount of this wool is grown in this country as yet, our manufacturers depending mostly on foreign countries. Almost all the English wool is made into worsted goods; and, while they import largely, they find it difficult to obtain full supplies.

In a discussion before the London Farmers' Club a year ago a large manufacturer observed that the demand for this wool had almost exceeded the supply during the past few years; and, from the gradually increasing price of this wool, and from the weight of fleece produced, it was a matter of great importance to the farmer to consider whether it was not for his interest to try and increase the quantity of this wool, and whether it may not be the most profitable article which he can grow on his farm; and the question for him is, how can we best supply the rising demand for this class of wool?

He says: "To the agriculturists I dare not offer a word touching the encouragement to be given to this or that kind of sheep. I can only convey to them, as a worsted spinner and manufacturer, a knowledge of the want of this particular kind of wool at the present day. To them I also point out the fact that our woollen trade has greatly increased, and would be still more largely increased had we sufficient of the raw material. A circular issued by the Chamber of



TEXEL, OR MOUTON FLANDRIN RAM.

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Commerce of Bradford and the woollen districts says the very high price of combing wool has led to the consideration whether it is not possible to encourage its growth, the high price being attributable to the consumption of this kind of wool gaining upon its growth. The Chamber of Commerce is of the opinion that no large additional supply can be obtained from the home growers, and points out places whence supplies might be obtained, and invites the organization of societies to disseminate among the inhabitants of such countries the information on management always at command.

"Again they say, the wool required should have a staple of from four to seven inches in length, of uniform quality throughout its whole length, and bright and lustrous in appearance. In addressing foreign powers they point to the fact that the flocks should be pastured as much as possible upon succulent grasses similar to those grown in Great Britain, the object being to obtain a bright lustrous wool." Mr. Cobden said: "The large quantity of wool which is imported from India is a very useful wool for blanket and carpet manufacture, but it does not compete with our long English wools; the same may be said of our Australian colonies, the whole coming from there being adapted for clothing, except the longer staples, which compete with our Down and German wools. There are hopes that at some time we may obtain from New Zealand a long staple wool, but at present that wool lacks the lustre which is a distinguishing feature of our long wools. From Canada we have received a small supply at uncertain intervals of a wool very much resembling our Leicester wool; but this wool is much depreciated in value for the want of cleared enclosures for sheep to graze in. This want causes the wool to have a good deal of burr or seed gathered by the wanderers, which is very troublesome to the manufacturer, and it will be a long time before Canada will be able to supply us with such wool."

The long wools were principally classed under the heads of Lincolns, Leicesters, New Oxford, Cotswold, Romney Marsh, Teeswater, and Kents, and we find the Texel sheep equal to any.

The old Lincoln sheep produced a long wool, making a fabric of lustrous appearance, almost resembling the Mohair or Angola goat; the Romney Marsh much the same; the Lincoln is finer, but not so lustrous; the Cotswold is a long staple and of a harsher character, used for combing purposes; the Down is of a shorter staple and used for worsteds.

Mr. Unwin observed that there was a greater demand for long wool and a wider scope for the extension of the growth of wool and breeding sheep than there was in any other department of agricultural enterprise or production, and he thought it the duty and interest of the British farmer to increase the production of this article to the fullest extent. The augmented value of lustrous wool was owing to the introduction of an entirely new branch of manufacture—the alpaca cloths—a most beautiful fabric. The extensive use of alpaca generally led to an increased demand for Lincoln wool for the purpose of mixing with alpaca and manufacturing these beautiful fabrics.

The result of this great demand for Lincoln wool has been to change the relative positions which the long and short wools formerly held, so that at the present time, in Bradford, the great centre of the coarse wool manufacture, South Down wool is selling at 1*s.* 8*d.*, and Lincoln fleece at 1*s.* 11*d.*

The home growth of England is estimated at about 175,000,000 pounds, all of which is long, or combing wool, or suitable for worsted manufacture.

All the foregoing remarks on the importance of producing more long wool apply with increased force to this country, where we consume so much and produce so little of that class.

For the last two or three years the long combing wools, called Canada, have brought the highest price in market on account of the scarcity of that class.

An examination of our imports will show that of some sixty millions of

woollen goods, about forty millions were manufactured of the longer worsted wool.

How important it is, then, that our farmers should pay more attention to raising sheep that will produce this class of wool so much desired, and also a good quantity of meat for the shambles.

"A nimble sixpence" is the maxim of trade and production in this country. A coarse wool, at the age of one year, may readily attain the weight of one hundred pounds; it may grow in that time eight pounds of wool. This wool would not waste more than twenty to twenty-five per cent. in scouring. A merino might be two years in getting a weight of fifty pounds, and produce ten pounds of wool, which would lose one-half in scouring. So the Cotswold would produce more real wool, (bringing at present prices quite as much money,) and twice as much flesh, in one year, as the merino did in two. As the uses of sheep comprise mutton-producing as well as wool-growing, this would be an economy of time, and a guarantee of "quick returns," quite in accordance with American activity and impatience of delay.

That this supposition is by no means unfair to the merinos is shown by a report of a committee of the New York Woolgrowers' Association, upon the award of Mr. Moore's premium "for the fleece of one year's growth or thereabouts, which, on being cleansed, shall be found to give the greatest weight of wool, in proportion to its time of growth and to the live weight of the animal."

There were fourteen merinos and, accidentally perhaps, a Cotswold ewe. The age of the latter was one year and twenty days. She weighed 99.5 pounds, her fleece 8.9 pounds, 7.31 pounds of scoured wool, a shrinkage of only 18 per cent., making her percentage of scoured wool to weight of animal 7, and to the weight of fleece 8.2.

The merino that took the prize was a ewe two years old, weighing 49 pounds, with a fleece of 9.85 pounds unwashed, and only 4.75 when scoured. While her percentage of fleece to live weight was 20, and that of the Cotswold only 8, their actual percentages of scoured wool to live weight were as 9.6 to 7. The Cotswold actually produced in one year 7.06 pounds, the merino 4.72 pounds. The report gives the Cotswold a middle place, with seven merinos on the list above her and seven below, as to the quantity of wool produced by one pound of animal in a year.

But the calculation of the committee embraces a fallacy, which vitiates the result, and actually places the prize animal below the Cotswold ewe. They assume the weight of the latter to be 99.5 pounds during the entire year, when she was a lamb of twenty days old as well as upon the day of shearing. Now, the fair method of calculation, and that which Mr. Lawes adopted in his well-known experiments, is to take the mean weight of the animal at the beginning and at the end of the experiment; for, if an animal consumes food in proportion to live weight, and its capacity for growing wool is affected by the same consideration, how unfair to estimate the cost of food or the amount of wool daily produced, the same in the case of a lamb of half a dozen pounds as in that of a sheep of one hundred pounds. It will be an estimate favorable to the merino to assume its weight at one year only 31 pounds, making its mean weight for the time of the experiment 40 pounds. The mean weight of the Cotswold might be 55 pounds. The merino having of scoured wool 4.75 pounds, the Cotswold 7.31 pounds, the quantity produced by each pound of the live weight would be, the merino .11875, the Cotswold .13290. In other words, one hundred weight of animal would produce in one case but 11 pounds 14 ounces of cleaned wool; in the other, (Cotswold,) 13 pounds 4 ounces.

So the Cotswold not only yielded more actual wool to the live weight, but about twice as much flesh in one year as the merino did in two. The New York committee were asked to decide only upon the wool-producing value of

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the sheep, and properly concluded that "*for the mere purpose of wool-raising very large sheep are not desirable.*" They might have added, that, for the purpose of *profit*, either by wool or mutton, *very old sheep are not desirable*, and that the more thrifty the animal, the more rapid the growth, and the better the wool.

The short-horn cattle, maturing for the shambles in two years, are the only beeves desired by the cattle-feeders of this country. The Leicester sheep at one time monopolized the feeding grounds of England by reason of their early maturity. The same principle will eventually, and soon, reduce the numbers of our sheep, which require three or four years to mature. It will also compel the killing off of sheep that have attained their growth, and cannot add another pound to their flesh. And, then, the poor price which poor mutton will command will prove that the quality and quantity of mutton are important elements in the calculation of profits. With hay and all kinds of "feed" at high prices, as in populous districts, the economy of keeping sheep, year after year, simply for their wool, which becomes poorer in quality the older they get, is not manifest. Quite thirty millions of sheep are now in the country, producing so large an increase yearly that the destruction of the old, if not an imperative necessity, will prove a practical certainty; and, as the number increases, the tendency to active slaughtering will become more marked. Shall the slaughter affect the young and thrifty, with bright, soft wool, or the aged, whose wool is deteriorating?

Another reason for increased attention to long wools is the fact that new fabrics are introduced in great variety, especially for the various garments of ladies requiring soft or lustrous wools, and are becoming daily more popular and more widely disseminated. This state of things has caused a scarcity of long wools and given them an advantage in price over the most popular of the merino wools of this country of fifteen to twenty per cent. In England this change of place of long and short wools, by which the long wool has exceeded the short in value as much as that formerly led all others, is thus referred to in the *Mark Lane Express:*

"The causes for so strange an alteration in the wool trade are various, but may be traced to the introduction of the llama wool from Peru. The length and fineness of this material enabled the manufacturer to make a kind of fabric entirely new to the British market, namely, those light gossamer stuffs so much prized and worn by our fair countrywomen. The success of this material set the manufacturers to work to attempt imitations of it from the long wools of British growth. In this they succeeded, especially since the invention of combing wool by machinery, about fourteen years since, which greatly improved the operation as well as the uniformity of the material upon which it was employed. By the use of this machine wool can now be combed of two and a half inches in length, but it is the long Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Romney Marsh, and Cotswold that have so much increased in value since the introduction of the llama and alpaca wool. The facility for perfecting these wools for the purpose of making imitations of llama fabrics is one of the causes of the advance, for the enormous demand for such fabrics for foreign countries, with the supply limited to the growth of the United Kingdom, has rendered this far more scarce than the short wool of which the amount from our colonies of Australia and New Zealand is annually increasing." These remarks will apply with equal force to the Texel sheep.

There is, in addition, a strong pecuniary inducement to use these wools, notwithstanding their price. They contain little oil or yolk. In scouring, the loss is rarely twenty-five per cent., and often less than twenty. The loss in the merino is forty per cent. and upwards, according as it is "improved;" the fleeces of prize rams often reaching seventy per cent. of waste. Excluding

these, and taking the most desirable Ohio grades, a comparison will show the superior economy of long wool to the manufacturer. The manufacturer pays seventy cents per pound, at present prices, and loses fifty per cent. in scouring, making the cost of the clean wool one dollar and forty cents. He buys Canada wool at eighty cents, and loses twenty per cent., leaving the cost of cleaned wool just one dollar per pound. Is it a wonder that manufacturers will use all the long wool they can, when it will make forty per cent. more cloth with the same money? By *Canada wools* the manufacturer simply means Cotswold' Leicester, Southdown, and their grades, most of which come from Canada, where few other sheep are kept. The manufacturers are getting awake to the extravagance of buying sixty or seventy pounds of grease and dirt in order to get thirty or forty pounds of wool. If farmers are equally wakeful, they will aim to produce the heaviest *cleansed* fleeces, and will be prepared to profit against the discriminations which manufacturers are preparing to make, and are even now, to some extent, making. And if, by selection of a location with a moist atmosphere, and an abundance of succulent food, the glossy, lustrous wool, like that of the Lincoln and Romney Marsh, in England, could be obtained in this country, for imitations of alpaca, it might, perhaps, prove the most profitable enterprise in wool-growing known in this country. The experiment is well worth a trial. The changeable atmosphere of this country might militate against the experiment, but there may be locations, near the lakes, or upon the cool, moist, rich glades of the Alleghanian plateaus, where it would prove highly successful and very profitable. Such wool would be worth more than merino, not only per pound or fleece, but also in proportion to the live weight of the animal, while the mutton would be far superior in price as well as quantity.

There is a want which might be met by enlarged operations in rearing long-wool flocks. Our markets, with few exceptions, are miserably supplied with large fat lambs. Nor can it be otherwise with our present flocks. Merino lambs will never satisfy the demand of enlightened eaters. Six pounds to the quarter, of lean, blue meat, at twelve weeks old, will never afford satisfaction to marketers, when fine fat quarters of twice that weight are obtainable. Nor will it pay the farmer to sell such lambs when those of double value could be produced in the same time at a little more expense.

As with lamb, so with mutton. Occasionally good fat mutton may be found in the butcher's stall; but where one is seen, a dozen lean and bony carcasses are exhibited. The buyer, who loves juicy chops or a fine leg of mutton, is compelled to pass by and procure a dinner from a loin of beef, of which there is usually an abundance of unexceptionable quality. Then there are others, who profess to dislike mutton, and always avoid it, simply because they have tried the poor, tough, unpalatable meat sold under that name. The ranks of mutton-eaters would soon be largely recruited from this class, if sheep of the proper breeds could be obtained by butchers. Mutton might then become, as it is in England, the best-liked and most generally used variety of meat. The prices of mutton in the London markets, at the present writing, average as follows, at wholesale:

Poor quality, per lb	13 cents.
Second quality per lb	15 "
Prime long-wool breeds, per lb	17 "
Prime Southdowns, per lb	18 "
Lambs, per lb	21 "

The retail price of lambs, the best pieces, is thirty-five to thirty-six cents, in gold—quite equal to the highest rates in the dearest markets of this country during the last year of the war, in the currency of the United States. This may be taken as an indication that prices of good lamb and mutton, which have

long been increasing in this country as well as in England, will be very sure to rule high here for many years to come.

Those, therefore, who commence with judgment and energy the production of really superior mutton, or early lambs, will reap an abundant harvest of profit; and the earlier the start, the quicker the reward. That it will engage the attention of enterprising farmers, and meet their just expectations, there is no room for doubt. With what particular breed of mutton-sheep, whether Downs, Texels, Cotswolds, or combinations of any of them, the best success may be attained, is a subject for more particular consideration—for experiment under different circumstances, in different latitudes, altitudes, and with different grasses.

It is thought that the price of meats will decline disastrously at the close of the war, and the public dissatisfaction, if such expectations should fail of realization, will be universal. It should be remembered that the war has somewhat reduced our meat supply. The war may soon be over, when a pastoral life will be quite too tame for soldiers, and the waste of meats cannot soon be repaired. Many of the soldiers are machinists and artisans. Thousands of them will repair to the mines of the Rocky mountains; not a few to prospect for petroleum; and many will seek in trade and speculation in cities the excitement which they crave. Most of them are efficient consumers of meats; very few will be producers. Then our shores are swarming, and for years will swarm as never before, with foreign immigrants, hungry for meat, however poverty has stinted their former supply. All these mouths, and those of millions of now unborn children, are to be supplied in the years of the immediate future. With what shall we feed them? Not with pork, becoming vastly dearer with the increased price of corn; not altogether with beef, while there is such a demand for wool, and just precisely the kind of wool produced by mutton sheep. We must have mutton; and sensible men, with money in their pockets, will pay prices that must *command* good mutton and render its production highly profitable. Conditions now exist favoring adequate remuneration in this branch of husbandry that have never before been brought together in so potent a combination. There is an opportunity to achieve a fame and a success in this direction, in a field as yet almost entirely new, that should engage the effort and ambition of our young and enterprising stock-breeders; and there is little doubt that it will be promptly and successfully occupied.

Early in the seventeenth century the long-legged African or Guinea sheep were introduced into Europe by the Dutch, and distributed among the islands near the Texel, and in Groningen and Friesland, where they were crossed with the common sheep of the country, producing the animal known there at the present time as the "*Texel*" or "*Mouton Flandrin*" breed of sheep.

At the period of the introduction of these sheep into Europe, some highly exaggerated accounts were given of them, says Youatt, by the writers of that time.

Corneille states that "they produced lambs twice in the year, and usually three lambs at a time, sometimes four and five, and occasionally, although rarely, seven at one yeaning." This, continues Youatt, is quite incredible, and Corneille himself acknowledges that it was "only on their first arrival from the east that they were thus prolific, but they were, and still are, justly valued for their size, beauty of form, and abundant produce of long and fine wool, milk, and lambs."

Wilson, in describing these sheep, says the ewe is remarkable for always producing several lambs every year, and whose wool, while possessing a certain degree of fineness, is of great length, and Youatt, writing in 1837, speaks of them as being of large size, measuring sometimes two feet nine inches in height, and having considerable resemblance to the British or Irish long-woolled breeds.

They are, he says, more prolific than any English breeds, and produce long fine wool, which can be appropriated to valuable purposes, and milk which is valuable and is used by the Dutch and Flemings in the manufacture of considerable quantities of cheese of good quality.

An anonymous French writer, in a work published by royal authority in 1763, in describing this breed of sheep, says that "it unites in itself the perfections be, longing to every other breed without their defects; its walk is firm, its deportment noble, its form well proportioned in all its parts, announcing a good constitution and a healthy temperament, and exempt from the maladies so common to other breeds. The length of its wool is proportioned to its height, and it does not disfigure the animal as in the English sheep, whose fleece is a burdensome weight, especially at the return of spring. The Flemish (Texel) sheep carries nothing about him that in the least detracts from his beauty. His wool is white without spot—it is of a dazzling whiteness; he is contented everywhere—everywhere he becomes a citizen of the place he inhabits."

This may have been, and doubtless was, extravagant praise, yet the Texel sheep of the present time are a remarkably beautiful, compact, hardy, and prolific race of animals, possessing quiet and contented dispositions, readily accommodating themselves to change of soil and climate, producing heavy fleeces of long and tolerably fine wool, mutton of superior quality, and lambs which, at four months of age, attain a weight of from seventy to eighty pounds.

The ewes generally produce twins, and occasionally breed twice in one season; both sexes are without horns.

The Texel sheep have not been extensively introduced into the United States, American sheep-breeders generally preferring to import the well-known and well-tried British breeds of mutton sheep. It has, however, been stated that the late Colonel Jaques, of the Ten Hills farm, of Somerville, Massachusetts, imported sheep from the Netherlands in 1823, and the "Massachusetts Agricultural Repository and Journal" records the importation of some sheep from the same source by the late Colonel Thomas H. Perkins, of Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1824. They were called the long woolled sheep of the Netherlands It is not known whether these sheep were of the true Texel breed, nor is it probable that pure-blood animals descended from that importation are now in existence.

An importation of a small flock of Texel sheep was made by the writer in the spring of 1863. They were procured in Friesland, near the Texel, and shipped at Rotterdam, Holland, for the port of Boston, Massachusetts. The importation consisted of one ram and seven ewes when put on board ship, but on arrival at Boston, after a voyage of eighty-one days, the flock was found to have increased to seventeen animals, nine lambs having been produced on the passage, affording strong corroborative evidence of the good qualities of the ewes as nurses, and also of the hardiness of the breed.

The live weight of the ram of this importation, in good condition, is over two hundred pounds, and the ewes vary in weight from one hundred and forty-five to one hundred and seventy-five pounds each. Their fleeces average over ten pounds each, and their wool is considered by manufacturers superior to either the Cotswold or Leicester.

This flock now (1864) numbers about thirty head, and the experience with them so far leaves no doubt of their adaptation and economical value to this country.

The accompanying portraits are those of a ram and ewe of this importation.