

and our horses went high both in price and excellence. The writer can call to mind one case in particular wherein one of our early settlers was the proud possessor of 200 brood mares, and these animals were easily reckoned to be worth \$200 per head around. Five years from that time, the entire outfit would not have brought \$15 per head. Edison, and a few more such people, had robbed them of their value. Without going into detail as to causes, the price of horses continued to fall, and the decline has never checked, until in a degree, perhaps, the past two years. Stock horses became a drug on the market at \$10, at \$5, yes, as low as \$2.50 per head. This state of affairs led inevitably to an entire disregard as to breeding them, and for years this once highly prized domestic animal ran wild and uncared for, yes, became detested as a range destroyer, save a few for immediate use. Crook county can raise, however, as fine a specimen of the horse as ever made a track. It is a natural horse-

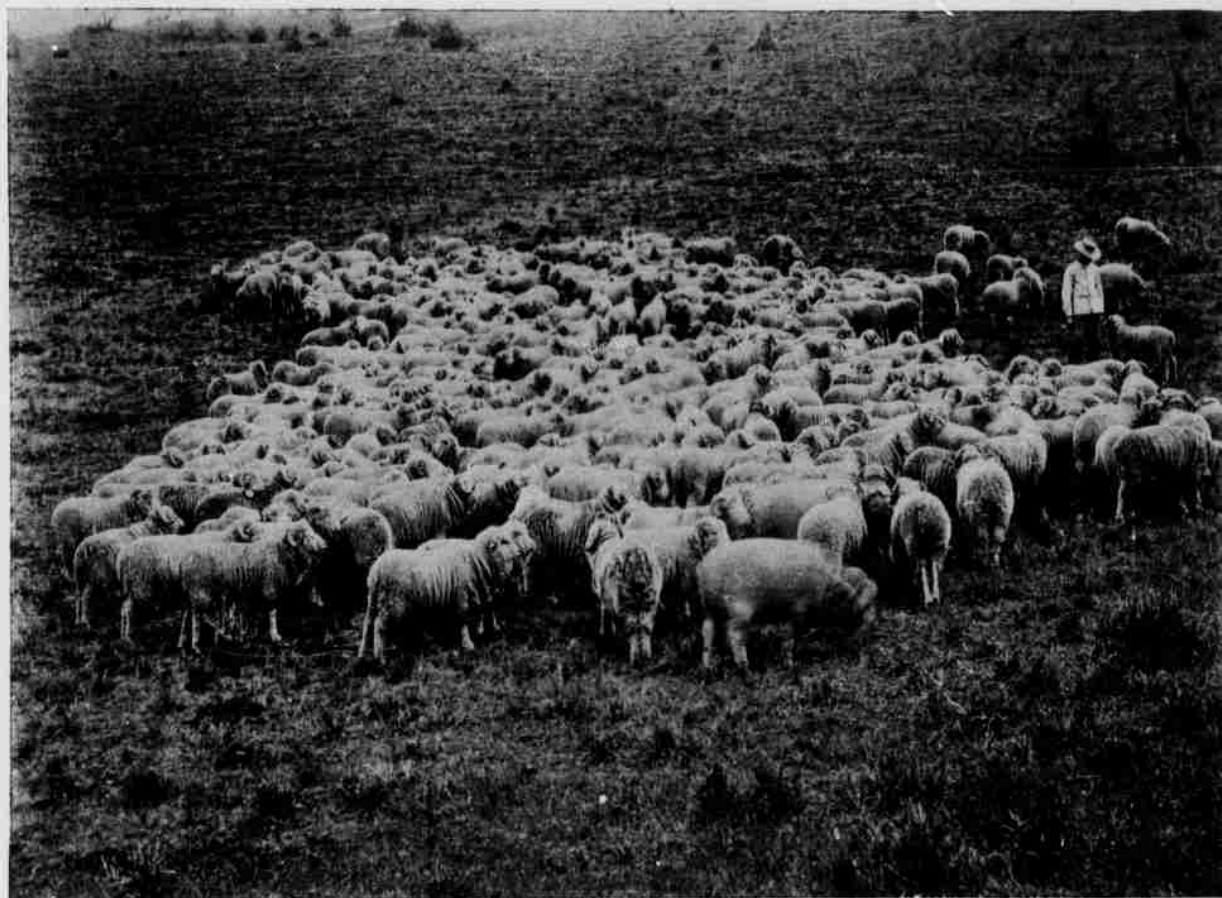
shearing, were herded into the high mountain ranges. Pretty much the same system is yet followed, except the encroachment of settlement upon the once open winter ranges has made it necessary to confine each flock to a much smaller territory during the winter. This state of affairs has led to a substitution of alfalfa hay in a great measure during the winter for the grass that once grew upon the lands which are now settled. In fact, it is claimed by those who have tried the experiment, that a good ewe will return a fair profit if fed the year round on alfalfa in locations where that variety of hay can be produced without too great expense. Such being the case, it will readily be understood how this variety of feed can be substituted for native grass for three, four or even five months out of the year at a profit.

The prices of sheep in Crook County during the past year have ranged as follows: Ewes, \$2.75; lambs, \$2.00; yearling wethers \$2.50; two-year-old wether, \$3.00

Alfalfa.

Alfalfa culture was begun in a small way in the northern part of the county about the year 1890. The abundant yield, together with the quality of the hay, soon caused alfalfa to become quite popular as a product upon lands lying along the small creeks in different parts of the county. The popularity of the plant has continued to grow until thousands of acres are now seeded to alfalfa along the Ochoco and Crooked river valleys. The waters of Crooked river are gradually being taken out in canals for a distance of one hundred miles through the center of the county, and are being utilized for the purpose of irrigating large tracts of alfalfa.

Although in a number of instances three crops of hay are taken from alfalfa meadows each year, the most general and practical yield for hay is but two crops, reserving the later growth for pasture. In this manner land sown to alfalfa is made to yield on an average five tons of hay per



T. S. HAMILTON'S THOROUGH-BRED RAMS ON THE RANGE NEAR HIS RANCH.

raising country. Its high altitude and dry soils fit it especially for that purpose, and if the market for horses ever becomes settled on a permanently paying basis, horse-raising will again be resumed here as of old.

Sheep.

The raising of sheep has been the leading industry of Crook County for a number of years. In the opinion of the writer it is destined to continue to be for years to come. Cattle raising, as in the past, will continue a close second. But the fact of sheep yielding two crops per annum—wool and mutton—will continue to give them in the future, as in the past, the advantage.

The topography of Crook County fits it especially for raising sheep. The raising of sheep here, however, is undergoing a decided change. Under former conditions, little preparation was made for them in the way of winter feed. They were ranged on the low lying hills and valleys during the winter months, and, after lambing and

per head. Last season's lambing was the largest ever experienced in the history of the business in this county, averaging near a hundred per cent. of lambs. Usually about seventy per cent. is realized. The wool product of last year was also the heaviest ever raised in Crook County, averaging about ten pounds per head. What wool has been sold during the present season has averaged about 13½ cents per pound. The average loss among the flocks of Crook County is growing less each year, owing to the greater amount of feeding and care during the winter. Notwithstanding the heavy drain upon the flocks of the county by Eastern buyers during the past three years, the number of sheep have about held up in the aggregate.

What the future has in store for the sheep industry, no one knows. It is fair to presume, however, that its future may be judged by its past. The price of its products will continue to vary, but not crash, as in '93, let us hope.

acre, as well as an excellent pasture for fall and early winter purposes.

Not until the past season has the price of alfalfa hay fallen to a point low enough to justify its being used for fattening stock for market, except in the extreme northern portion of the county. But during the present winter, stock is being fed for spring market all along the Ochoco valley, and it is evident that the advent of alfalfa culture is destined to change to a great extent the present farming areas of McKay, Ochoco and Crooked river valleys into a stock feeding region where large numbers of cattle and sheep will be fattened for late winter and spring markets.

This new addition to Crook County's industries is destined to increase the aggregate products of the county very largely in the future. Heretofore, this vast region has been utilized entirely as a stock raising country, but it is evident that the advent of alfalfa culture is destined soon to add stock feeding to the stock raising in-