

WOOL

The United States is fast becoming, if it has not already become, the first wool producing country in the world. If it is second, it is second only to Australia, of which wool is the largest product. Our yearly product is now close to 250,000,000 pounds, from over 40,000,000 sheep. The farmers of a country which produces so vast a quantity of wool should know something of its nature and of the characteristics which fix its value, for the better the quality of the product the greater the profit of the production, and wool especially depends for its quality and value upon the care and skill with which sheep are bred, fed and managed. Wool is a species of hair, differing from hair in having its surface covered with imbricated scales, the points of which form very minute hooks, so closely placed that 23,000 of them are to be counted upon one inch in length of the surface of a single fibre of fine Merino wool. It is this peculiarity of wool which gives to it in part its characteristic ability to felt or mat or form a tough, solid sheet when it is pressed and beaten together. It is formed of three layers, this imbricated or scaly surface; the cortical substance which contains the coloring matter and the central pith. Wool, as well as hair, is a solid fibre and not tubular, as has been stated and generally believed. Like hair, it grows from a bulbous root in the derma, or second layer of skin, the source from which it springs being a gland known as the hair follicle, and from this the substance is secreted by which the fibre is lengthened as it grows. These follicles are very numerous, one single square inch of the skin of a pure Merino having from 40,000 to 50,000 of them, each one having its fibre of wool rooted in it; while the skin of a coarse wool sheep has from 5,000 to 6,000 to the square inch. Fine Merino wool is about one seven hundred and fiftieth part of an inch in diameter. Wool differs from hair not only in its outer structure, but in a peculiar spiral arrangement of its cells and outer scales, by which it easily twists and curves and forms an adherent mat or mass called felt. It consists of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen and oxygen to the extent of 96.33 per cent. and 3.67 per cent. of sulphur. When completely burned, then, it leaves no ash, and can be wholly reduced to gases. It is covered, when upon the sheep's back, with a soapy and oily matter secreted from the glands of the skin known as yolk, and this consists very largely of potash, 59 per cent. being fatty compounds and 41 per cent. mineral matter, of which 84 per cent is potash. The yolk is therefore a potash soap and is soluble in cold water. The welfare of the sheep and the quality and value of the wool depend very much upon the existence of the oily, greasy yolk, for it prevents the wool from matting, felting or "cotting" upon the sheep's back and becoming brittle and weak. The yolk forms from 20 to 60 per cent. of the weight of the fleece in its natural state and there is besides from 7 to 10 per cent. of oil. The peculiar character of wool is in a very great measure dependent upon the health and robustness of the sheep, for if the necessary secretions required to supply this complicated structure are not furnished, the wool stopping, growing or grows thin and weakly, and is harsh and brittle and breaks into small pieces, known in the wool trade as "noils;" or it mats upon the sheep's back, so that it is torn to pieces in carding, or it is so short as to be useless except for the commonest manufactures.

Wool is of several kinds, graded first according to its length, then as to its fineness. It is short, medium and long; the first and second are carded and the last is combed. It is also distinguished as short or cording, delaine or combing. The art of combing has been improved of late years, so that a class of fine Merino wool, from 3 to 3 1/2 inches in length, is now combed and used for making those fabrics known as delaines, while the coarser long wools are used for worsted goods, hosiery and alpaca. Wools are also graded, in regard to the diameter of the fibre, as superfine, fine, medium and coarse; these are again sorted as regards their strength, elasticity and evenness of fibre. Some fleeces are so irregular in this respect as to require sorting into eight or ten different qualities, and as the services of a competent wool-sorter are valuable and highly paid, of course fleeces of this kind suffer as to their market value. Again, some sheep have coarse hairs growing in their fleeces, on the shoulder or the flanks, or about the wrinkles in Merinos, and as these hairs will not take the dye equally with wool, they seriously impair the value of the fleece. These peculiarities depend upon the breeding of the sheep, and are to be avoided by a proper selection of the ram and the discarding of imperfect ewes from the flock. Fashion has much to do with the profitability of wool-growing. When men wear broadcloth and ladies dressed in the fine soft merinos, the short and very fine woolled German Merinos—Saxons and Silesians—were mainly kept, and other sheep were of little account. Then at times of unusual briskness of the wool market, when fine fleeces sold for \$1 and more per pound, choice breeding animals sold for large prices, and sheep weighing less than 100 pounds often brought several thousand dollars a head. As fashion changed these same sheep were sacrificed for their pelts, having no market value for their fleeces, and having no good mutton about them. Fashion has now reached a more settled and reasonable condition, and the growth of our woolen manufactures has created settled and permanent markets for many varieties of wool—all that we produce from all our various breeds, and some of inferior kinds that we do not rear in sufficient quantities. In fact, the consumption of wool is now, and promises to be for many years in advance of the supply; and the prospect seems very secure for a steady and profitable demand for whatever kind of wool may be grown. But the preponderance of one kind of sheep or another is fixed very strictly by the conditions and necessities prevailing in our varied agriculture. Near markets for lambs and mutton it does

not pay to grow wool alone, and it does not pay to grow mutton sheep far away from markets, nor can good mutton sheep or lambs be raised on grass alone. The variations in our agriculture, arising from local and other conditions, such as soil and climate, the most convenient crops, are all to be considered in choosing the kind of sheep that may be kept with the most profit or convenience, and in this regard should be considered the relative adaptation of the various breeds of sheep, together with the demands of manufacturers. Medium wool enters most extensively into manufactured goods, and is the sole reliance of the country woolen and carding mills. This is made up of the common native fleeces, the Southdown and other Down grades, and low grade Merinos. The common sheep of the West, improved by crossing with pure Merinos, also supply this class of wool, which is the material of which are made cassimeres, common flannels, clothing goods, serges, the better class of blankets, common shawls, the coarser dress goods, hosiery, knitted goods, felt hats of the better kinds, gloves, coatings and overcoatings; the coarser and poorer class of wools from this grade of sheep supplies the carpet manufacture and the cheaper kinds of clothing and felted goods. Pure and high grade Merinos supply the material for delaines, cassimeres and other dress and fine clothing goods without nap; for the fine flannels, hosiery and undergarments; for the finest shawls and the best goods for men's wear; also, for mixing with shoddy for second-class goods, which carry a fine face but have a very poor backing. The longest, fine merino wool is used in the best ladies' cloth and men's goods; the long, lustrous combing wool of the Cotswolds, Leicester and Lincoln is used for worsted goods, buntings, fringes, moreens, alpacas, mohairs, lastings, furniture damask, reps, braids, bindings and the soft nubias and shawls. Considering that we import wool and woolen goods to the value of \$30,000,000 yearly, or an equivalent to about 100,000,000 pounds of wool, there is certainly little fear that American farmers can go astray in keeping sheep, or in choosing whatever kind their circumstances or their tastes might make the most desirable. But whatever sheep are chosen, the lesson intended to be conveyed by the foregoing remarks should not be neglected. This is, that the successful result of wool growing depends wholly upon the quality of the product, and that this is directly depending at all times and under all circumstances upon the health and condition of the sheep. This, of course, is in proportion to the carefulness and skill with which the flock is fed, sheltered and protected from accident and damage. It matters not in this respect what sheep is kept if they are well kept, but it does matter if a farmer within 100 miles of a large market where lamb and mutton are saleable at a good price should make the mistake of keeping sheep wholly for their fleeces, or if the shepherd on the plains should attempt to keep a flock which requires the best of shelter, and roots and high grain feeding, and will not yield a good fleece unless it is fed so light that its carcass is always ready for the butcher. The right sheep in the right place, and the right man and the right management comprise the test which each one must elucidate, expound and practice for himself as his tastes and circumstances may vary.

Sheep. Their Types and Characteristics.

The Merino is the only sheep among the many breeds introduced into the United States that has attained a higher type in the hands of American breeders than is to be found among the best specimens in the country whence imported. While with other breeds and varieties steady and heavy drafts are being necessarily made upon their "native land" for animals, with the hope to improve upon the American-bred animals of the same type, the breeders of Merinos find in the fine-wool fleeces of the United States the best specimens of their favorite sheep. Good judges have frequently carefully examined the flocks of Europe with the object of securing breeding animals that promised, in some important particular, improvement upon the best fine-wool specimens in this country, and have as often returned with the conviction that the model fine-wool sheep—for the American husbandman—was the American Merino. This conclusion is not to be ascribed to pride of country or such local prejudice as might be expected, in some measure, to give bias to judgment and lend shape to conclusions. It will be found to be sustained by the closest analysis. In weight of fleece proportioned to weight of carcass; in weight of cleaned wool from such fleece; in aggregate return upon necessary investment, the strictest comparison among the several fine-wool varieties will be found favoring the American Merino. A noticeable increase in size and weight of carcass has been made within the time most especially covering the improvement of the Merino at the hands of American breeders. For a while (and at present in certain localities with certain individuals), efforts of breeders have been directed towards the development of wool production without materially increasing the size of the carcass. This, however, is not the most popular standard, and a still further increase in size of body, so far and so fast as it may be secured without sacrifice of other merits, may be looked for—in fact, is demanded by those sections of the country that now furnish the market for the majority of breeding stock, and which are hereafter to constitute the main wool-producing localities. Such increase in size will be neither rapid nor extreme; but that it will come may be predicted with little risk of disappointment. While the American Merino is unquestionably most prominent and valuable as a wool-bearing sheep, from the fact that efforts of breeders have been mainly, if not exclusively, exerted in developing that characteristic, it is clear to the observant student of live-stock husbandry that this animal is destined to a

future of no inconsiderable importance in the relation it will sustain with reference to the meat supply for a rapidly augmenting population. Already the overflow of male animals from frontier flocks, largely of Merino blood, has recognition in meat stock centers. These animals, when approaching the age of fleece deterioration can be most profitably disposed of as mutton stock; and as their compact and well-fatted carcasses become familiar to consumers, the remaining prejudice against Merino mutton—a prejudice less foundation than the casual observer would suspect—will gradually disappear. This conclusion finds ample warrant in the fact, that in the principal markets of the country the price of mutton sheep is now determined more by the condition than by the breed of the animals offered. Hence, it follows that the increase in size already secured—amounting from 25 per cent. to 40 per cent. over original importations—is by no means likely to prove the limit. The full extent of the increase of carcass is most fully realized by the close observer, or upon measurement. The improved symmetry secured by imparting rotundity to the body, shortening the legs, deepening the chest, broadening and filling the hips and thighs, and otherwise generally improving the physical development, has brought weight without materially adding to height, the first point to meet the eye of the non-critical observer. The most conspicuous improvement in the American Merino upon its imported ancestry is apparent in the fleece. Here the gross weight from a single animal has been increased three hundred per cent. to four hundred per cent. in some instances—say from 7 1/2 lbs to 37 lbs in rams' fleeces. Scouring tests show that the amount of cleaned wool from these representative fleeces has been more than double, while being otherwise improved. In fineness of fiber certain specimens of American Merino will be found rivaling the standard Saxon of a few decades ago. In 1878, Dr. H. A. Cutting, of Lunenburg, Vt., at the request of the Vermont Merino Sheep Breeders' Association, carefully measured a series of samples of wool fibers from American Merino sheep. The average diameter of rams' wool in the collection was ascertained to be 1-1045 of an inch; the finest, 1-1411. Ewes' wool, average diameter, 1-1308; finest, 1-1881 of an inch. When these measurements are compared with earlier ones recognized by Youatt, Ranfall and others, a most remarkable improvement is manifested, even after due allowance has been made for the greater accuracy obtainable under improved appliances now within reach of scientists, for a comparison of samples obtained many years since with those from flocks of the present day, fails to disclose to the unaided eye so great a reduction in diameters as is indicated by these figures—in reality as much as one-half.—Breeder's Gazette.

The Deschutes River.

The Deschutes river is one of the most romantic and beautiful streams in the State. It rises on the eastern slope of the Cascades north of Mount Thielsen in the northern part of Lake county, flows in a northeasterly direction, a distance of about 200 miles, and empties into the Columbia a few miles above The Dalles. It is supplied chiefly by the snows of these mountains, and is icy cold from its source to the mouth. Over one hundred miles of its length is through the rough, wild and almost barren portion of this country, known as the lava beds and rimrocks. Though in many places it has valleys, which are settled by thrifty stock men. It is truly astonishing at the amount of water carried off through its channel. Its depth does not vary two feet during the whole year. Some of the wildest and most magnificent scenery is found along this stream, many views of which have been taken, and are now in possession of the citizens of this place. It is not navigable for any great distance in any place, on account of the extreme swiftness of its current. But the most beautiful feature of this magnificent stream is the variety, and immense numbers of trout found in its waters. Any one but a murderer at heart becomes ashamed of himself after fishing in this river a day or two. Sixty fish an hour is very fair, if not good angling, but this feat has been accomplished in the Deschutes. The fish are trout, no other kind being ever caught, except an occasional white fish. These trout vary in length from six to eighteen inches, embracing the several varieties of mountain trout, silver-sides, red-sides and salmon trout. From its source to a distance of perhaps a hundred miles, it is a continuous torrent—a series of cataracts and falls. In many places for miles its banks are over a hundred feet in height, in some places rising perpendicularly one hundred and fifty, or two hundred feet.—Prineville News.

Black Sand Mines.

Black sand mines have been worked at intervals for several years past, on both North and South beaches. At the present time a Mr. Gibson is working the one on South beach. In order that our valley readers may understand something of the nature of black sand mining, a short description of the modus operandi will not be out of place. The strata of black sand is located but two or three feet below the beach surface. Sluice boxes made of lumber that is irregularly sawn are constructed, the irregular surface of the bottom board in the boxes making all the riffle that is necessary to save the precious metal. The gold found in this mine is very fine, globular in shape and covered with a coating of what our informant called marine oil. After the sand has been thrown into the sluices, the riffles becoming sufficiently loaded, the boxes are swept out, and the sweepings boiled in a solution of potash. This process removes the oil from the gold, when it can be readily gathered by the quicksilver. Mr. Gibson says he is not becoming wealthy very rapidly, though he is making fair wages.—Yaquna Bay Post.

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Death Amidst Squalls.

Yesterday afternoon Chief of Police Lappins was notified that a man living on Grant street, between Fourth and Fifth, needed looking after, as he was groaning and appeared to be in trouble, and that he kept his doors locked and refused to admit anyone. The chief, taking Wing with him, proceeded to the house, which belongs to Van DeLashmitt, and finding every door and window fastened took out a sash, with a chisel. The stench emitted when an opening was made was overpowering, but Wing managed to hold his breath long enough to crawl in and open the front door, and the chief rushed through and opened the back door so as to allow a current of fresh air to pass. The man who was found to be C. J. Weisswange, a civil engineer, was lying on the bare floor near a wash bowl, which was filled with blood thick and putrid. The man was unable to speak. He was raised up and placed in a sitting position, and the chief, leaving the officer to watch, started down town for a conveyance to take the sick man to the hospital. After going a couple of blocks he was overtaken by Wing, who said the man was dead. The chief then turned the matter over to Coroner Cooke who brought the body to the morgue, from whence it will be buried to-day unless claimed by friends, if there are any. Hemorrhage of the lungs was the cause of his death. He had been sick for some days, but absolutely declined all proffer of aid, extended by the neighbors. He had nothing to eat in the house and no bed, or much of anything that could be called furniture. There was a little oil stove he used for cooking, a wash bowl and oil chair, and one or two other things about the room. The inside of the house was a picture of the most abject poverty. The coroner will hold no inquest as to the cause of death is known beyond a question. Weisswange had no money or other valuables, except a small set of drafting tools.

A Wonderful Machine.

The annexed, in regard to the Parrish harvester, we clip from the Salem Talk. It is to be hoped that the machine may prove a success, but many have doubts of it. The government of New Zealand offered a very large reward for such a machine for a year or two since, and several were brought forward, but all failed to do the work required in a satisfactory manner, and the prize was not awarded. The Parrish harvester, containing the header, thrasher and sacker in one combination, is the greatest improvement in agricultural machinery the country has witnessed for years. The invention will be of great benefit to the world. It saves expense, it saves labor and expedites the harvest. The wheat is threshed and sacked the same moment it is cut. Six horses and two men will do any harvest with this machine. It has taken time to perfect it, and its small size and efficiency are the astonishing features about it. It is now being worked on the farm of J. L. Parrish, east of the railroad, East Salem. Those who are curious enough to see the greatest improvement in harvest machinery of the age should go and see this combination at work. Every farmer can own one and his two boys can do all the harvesting of wheat, oats or barley. If the farmer has no boys, his girls can do the work. The cost of this machine is much less than the old machine. In another year we may look for them in every field. Like all new inventions it does so much that it will take a little time to overcome prejudice and stand off the influence of capital in other machinery. But its day is fast coming.

The Oregon Short Line.

This railroad is now completed from Granger, on the Union Pacific, to Cokeville, a distance of 80 miles, and is being operated between these two points. Track laying is progressing very rapidly between Cokeville and Soda Springs, says the Renelle, the latter point being 140 miles from Granger, and to which place the road will be finished some time in September. The track of the railroad swings on to the Port Neuf river, down which it runs for 30 miles, to Port Neuf Station, on the Utah and Northern railroad. Reaching Port Neuf Station the Oregon Short Line follows the Utah and Northern track for ten miles, to Pocotello. This stretch of track is already laid, as well as 30 miles from Pocotello to American Falls, and the road over this section is being operated. At American Falls a splendid iron bridge spans Snake river directly over the falls—a magnificent spectacle.

Fire at Spokane Falls

A fire broke out at Spokane at 2 o'clock Friday morning and destroyed the Franklin hotel, Still's billiard hall and Quinn's large barn. The fire spread rapidly and the inmates of the houses barely escaped. Business men had given up all hope when the wind changed to the southeast and the town was saved. There was no loss of life, but two or three men were badly burned. The hot-lad barn were owned by Peter Quinn; value \$4000, insurance \$1000. A large policy had just run out. The hotel was being run by Mr. Still, who owned all the furniture. This furniture and that of the billiard hall, its stock and the building were insured for about \$3500. Jones, in the Exchange billiard hall, lost \$400 by breakage in removal of stock and furniture. R. Williams lost money and clothing worth \$400, and others sustained considerable losses. The fire is supposed to have originated in the kitchen of the hotel through carelessness on the part of a Chinese cook. "Red Handed Mike" O'Connor and a man named Whitwell were severely scorched and blistered while taking water that was passed to them to throw on the fire.

It is announced that \$8,500,000 of the \$10,000,000 of Canadian Pacific railway bonds have been taken up. A portion of the Land League denounce the action of the Philadelphia League sympathizing with Arabi Bey. The Texas cattle fever is reported as prevalent in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Alabama, Virginia and West Virginia. The dispatches continue to be loaded down with accounts of lynchings, rapes, murders and suicides throughout the Atlantic States. Where are all the missionaries? Oregon stocks sold in New York on the 11th inst as follows: O. R. & N. 15 1/4; Transcontinental 9 1/2; Northern Pacific Common 5 1/4; preferred 9 1/4; Oregon Improvement Co. 8 1/4.

If Not? Why Not? Use the Great Oregon Blood Purifier, an appetizer, liver regulator, and sure cure for your impure blood. It makes the skin smooth, soft and fresh; the eyes bright and sparkling; the brain clear; the cheeks plump and rosy; the breath pure and sweet, and good circulation promotes vigor to the whole system. Ask your druggist for it. Price, \$1. Just now Frank Abell is taking some of the most charming and lovely promenade and panel photographs we ever saw. Call at his studio on first street, Portland, and see them. Strangers always made welcome. Ashland Things: Corn looks well in Rogue River valley this year. As the Willamette Valley and Puget Sound regions are not corn-producing sections, Rogue River valley ought to find a profitable market for Indian corn in Portland after the railroad is built.

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