Sheep Husbandry . . . . II.

Marking, etc., is more necessary in the case of sheep, than with cows and oxen, as they look more alike, and are more apt to break away from their enclosures. The system of marking dates back to the first settlement of the country, when cattle had the range of the highway and the woods, and were not seen by the owner except at long intervals. At first, each owner had his particular mark upon the ear, or elsewhere, kept upon record at the town clerk's office, and this mark was to be the evidence of ownership. Cropping, slitting, and notching the right or left ear were the contrivances resorted to.

As the country became more thickly settled, and the pastures were enclosed, owners were enabled to confine their animals to their own lands, and were less careful about marking. It is now mainly confined to sheep—the most slippery of our domestic animals—and the marking is usually made upon the wool, and, of course, has to be renewed at each shearing. The best method is to have a stamp with the initials of the owner's name, and to print the letters in large capitals upon the side of the sheep. A convenient size for the letters will be about three inches in length. The paint or ink may be made of a mixture of linseed oil, spirits of turpentine, and lamp-black. Any mixture that will leave a black mark, which the rains cannot wash out, will answer.

At the time of marking, tarring should also be attended to. The tar bucket, with a swab, should stand bes de the paint pot, and the nose of each sheep should be smeared with tar. This guards against the fly, which deposits her eggs in the nostrils, and produces worms or grubs in the head. The tarring may be renewed, occasionally, during the summer. This precaution costs but a trifle, and it may save a good many sheep from disease.

Pasture.—The flock, being marked, and tarred, are now ready for pasture. Let it not be inferred, that because the sheep is a small animal and requires less than a cow, that it can live upon air. Mutton and wool can only be made of good substantial feed, of some kind. Mullens and sweet fern, with the largest admixture of brakes, and five fingers will not answer. Experience has determined, that a wet pasture is not suitable for sheep. Some part of it, at least, must be dry, substantial upland. They thrive best upon dry gravelly loams, or in high mountainous regions, without much regard to the quality of the soil. They are usually put in the pastures most remote from the farm house, as they require less care than other animals.

If the soil be poor, it should not be overstocked. Sheep should have full feed in order to thrive and pay the best profits to their owners. It is very generally observed that pastures not over fed improve every year, when stocked with sheep. All the droppings are retained upon the soil, and the grass increases from year to year. The brush should be kept down by annual cutting, especially briars, which become entangled in the wool and damage its quality.

Salting.—All ruminating animals are fond of salt and this natural appetite should be gratified. There are those who claim that it is of no use, but we always suspect such farmers of loving their ease more than the thrift of their flocks. It is some trouble to visit the flock a mile or two from home weekly, especially, if it is not done on Sunday. But the salters may claim that every flock should have a weekly visit from their owner, whether they are salted or not, so that really no time is lost in the operation.

If this is not practicable, a shelter may be made of a few boards, in some convenient part of the pasture, and the salt may be left in troughs under cover, where the sheep can help themselves. This is, perhaps, the better course in any event, as they are less liable to eat to excess where they have the article constantly on hand. In Spain, which is justly celebrated for its pure flocks, the shepherds are accustomed to give the sheep all the salt they will eat, when they return from the summer downs or pastures. They allow about two pounds and a half, on an average, to each sheep, which is consumed in about five months. It is not given in winter, as it is thought to produce abortion in the ewes. Sheep giving milk require the most salt—it sharpens the appetite, and leads them to eat some coarse herbage and weeds that might otherwise not be consumed.

Destroying Ticks.—Few enemies are more troublesome than wood ticks, which cling with great tenacity to the skin, and are only exterminated by violence. They are most likely to trouble sheep that have the range of a woodland, or brush pasture. Tobacco water is an effectual remedy, not only for ticks, but for any cutaneous diseases of the flock. The ticks are found in greatest numbers upon the lambs, their flesh being preferred with a nicety of taste that would do credit to dog—or man. It is generally found necessary to apply the remedy only to the lambs of the flock. Boil a sufficient quantity of refuse tobacco or stems to make a strong decoction. No definite rule can be given, as it must depend somewhat upon the number of animals to be dipped. Make the liquid strong enough to kill ticks. A half hogshead makes a convenient vessel for the operation, which requires two individuals. A board is laid across the top, upon which the lamb is laid after dipping, and the liquid is squeezed out by pressing the hand over the skin. The whole body should be immersed, except the head—care being taken not to get it into the mouth or eyes. If the decoction is too strong, it will sicken the lambs and make them stagger. If the old sheep are affected with the ticks, or loss of wool from any disease of the skin, they should be dipped also.

Flesh wounds from any cause during the Summer will need looking after. The smell of blood draws numerous flies, which lay their eggs in the flesh with as much eagerness as if life were already departed. These should have an application of tar, or spirits of turpentine, in small quantity.

Japanese Gardening.

Now that the Japanese embassy to this country is attracting so much attention, and anything respecting their movements, appearance and habits, is read with so much eagerness, a correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* contributes a few remarks concerning the gardening skill of our new acquaintances.

It has long been known, says this writer, that the Chinese and Japanese were very skillful in all the operations of gardening, but their taste is very deficient, according to our standards, and accordingly the results reached by them are only worthy of notice for their curious character and the skill and patience with which their operations are conducted. The gardeners of both nations are particularly successful in dwarfing plants. They are said to produce fruit trees, which are models of beauty and fruitfulness, and which do not exceed a foot in height. Such a result is only produced after years of patient labor, care and watchfulness.

It is said by a distinguished traveler and botanist, that he saw at Jeddo a pine tree, full grown, whose branches only occupied a space of *two square inches*. On the other hand, he was shown a pine of the same species, whose branches were artificially extended over a circumference of 136 feet.

The manner in which plants are dwarfed is said to be as follows: The smallest seeds of the smallest plants are selected as the foundation; in this respect their action is conformable to the principles which are known to govern the vegetable kingdom in regard to habits of growth. As soon as the plants make their appearance, they are covered with honey or dissolved sugar; the gardeners then introduce into the little box which protects the plants, a nest of ants, whose eggs soon hatch and produce an active colony, greedy of sweets, and incessantly running over the plants, which are kept covered with the solution by means of camel's hair pencils. The constant action of these insects, which are always running over every part of the plant, keeps up a peculiar excitement, which ends by producing the state of "pigmitude" so much admired by Japanese and Chinese amateurs.

We consider the above account of the manner of dwarfing plants as excessively doubtful, to say the least; but we give the process so that if any reader of the *Country Gentleman* feels disposed to try the experiment for himself, he can do so. It is much more probable, we think, that the process is similar to our own grafting on the roots of dwarf plants, assisted by pinching off shoots, root pruning, &c., but carried on with a perseverance and patience to which our gardeners are strangers.

Japanese gardeners are especially fond of clipping pines into all shapes. Their branches are spread out like fans, or upon horizontal trellises so as to represent a flat dish.

In fine their whole gardening may be said to be conducted with a view only to produce curious and astonishing, rather than pleasing and beautiful results.

Salting Cream and Butter Making.—A writer in the *Homestead* reports a statement made at the New Haven lectures, that by adding a tablespoonful of fine salt to a quart of cream, as the latter is skimmed from off the milk and placed in the cream-pots until enough accumulates for churning, the time required for churning is reduced to two or three minutes. In a trial made by the writer, he found this to be true, and his theory is, that the salt acts upon the thin coating of the globules of butter, and so dissolves it that a slight agitation breaks it, and the butter comes at once. The experiment can easily be tried by any butter-maker.

Health of Cows.

The cow is an animal which, most of all others, contributes directly to the comfort and health of the family.

A "Dairy Farmer" furnishes the following plain and useful directions, which we commend as highly worthy the observance of all who have cows and other domestic animals to care for:

Good health in domestic animals is always a matter of primary importance.

As bad health in parents transmits a tendency to disease in the offspring, it is important that every kind of animal we desire to continue on our farms should be kept vigorous and healthy.

As domestic animals are a source of human food, it is a matter of great importance to preserve them in a healthy condition. Diseased meat carries its qualities into the stomach of its consumers. It is a serious objection which vegetarians urge against the use of animal food, that the artificial circumstances in which animals live, and the bad treatment they receive, renders them unhealthy.

As an unhealthy animal cannot consume food to as good advantage as a well one, it is again economical to avoid disease.

As comparative misery and discomfort accompany disease it is humane as well as economical to see to it that the animals under our care enjoy as far as possible their creature comforts.

Each of these circumstances is a sufficient reason for guarding with scrupulous care the health of the animals we feed; but when we derive milk from animals it is doubly important that they are kept free from every objectionable taint. A sickly cow not only yields a diminished profit, but she yields sickly milk, and sickly in a higher degree than her flesh.

If a cow eats anything that has a strong or disagreeable odor, it appears in her milk.

If she eats anything medicinal, it comes out in her milk.

If she is feverish, her milk shows it.

If she has sores about her, pus may be found in her milk.

If she is fed upon decayed or diseased food, her milk, since it is derived from her food, will be imperfect. It is as impossible to make good milk from bad food, as to make a good building from rotten timber.

If there is anything wrong about her, it will appear in her milk, as that is an effective source of casting filth from her organism.

These facts should at all times be well impressed upon the minds of dairymen, but more especially at this season of the year. Closely confined in their narrow stalls through the long winter, where the air is not always fresh and pure, nor water and exercise always had when desired, nor their food always free from foul medicinal weeds, as thistles, daisies, white top, &c., cows are very likely to vary from a perfectly healthy condition in spring; cheese will be faulty enough, do the best we can; that every dairyman knows. The health of the cows should not, at any rate, be allowed to become a cause of deterioration. Green food should now, if it has not been before, alternated as often as possible with the dry; for this purpose beets, carrots, turnips, potatoes, cabbages, parsnips and apples are valuable.

Ventilation and watering should be promptly attended to, and salt and meal, made by pulverizing burnt bones should be kept where daily access can be had to them if desired, nor should their strength and flesh be allowed to fail for the want of a sufficiently nutritious diet. The best flavored butter and cheese cannot be made from cows that are badly fed, or ailing, or poor.

Dressing Sheep Skins.—We have found it profitable rainy-day work sometimes, to dress a sheep-skin with the wool on. It makes a nice foot mat; a very comfortable thing in a sleigh or wagon of a cold day. It is easily dressed.

The following simple method we extract from an exchange: Take equal parts of salt and alum, pulverized, and sift about four ounces on the flesh side of the skin while fresh from the body; or if dry, after being moistened; then fold it up carefully and keep it in a damp place about four days, and then open it and lay it on the table, and scrape it with a dull knife to get all adhering flesh off, and then rub it with a blunt wooden instrument until it is dry and soft.

To dress a sheep or deer skin for soft leather, without the wool, we see the following simple process recommended:

One-half ounce of oil of vitriol, a tea-cupfull of salt, from one to three quarts of milk, warm the milk, then add the salt and vitriol; stir the skin in the liquid forty minutes, keeping it warm, then work till dry.

The Indians dress all their deer skins by soaking them in a paste made of brains, and after rubbing them, drying them in smoke.

Preserving Green Corn—A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* gives the following recipe for preserving green corn for winter:

Cut the corn off the cob, and put it in a stone jar, with a handful of salt to a pint of corn. When the jar is full, put a weight on it. When you wish to use it, remove a little of the top, and wash and soak over night.

Tomatoes.—The *Working Farmer* says of the tomato plant that it bears eighty per cent. of its fruit within eighteen inches of the ground, while more than half of the plant is above that part. When the branches are cut they do not bleed, and they may therefore be shortened in immediately above the large or early setting fruit.

The removal of the small fruits on the ends of the branches is no loss, for the lower fruit will swell to an unnatural size by trimming, and both a greater weight and measure of fruit will be the consequence, beside obtaining a larger portion five to fifteen days earlier.

The trimming should be so done as to leave a few leaves beyond the fruit, to insure perfect ripening. The importance of early maturing is too evident to need comment.

The burying of the removed leaves immediately around the plant is a good practice, both by insuring full disturbance of the soil, and by the presenting a fertilizer progressed precisely to the point of fruit making. The portions buried decay rapidly, and are readily assimilated.

Protect the Roots of Trees.—Most trees in this latitude, says the *American Agriculturist*, will receive benefit by winter protection. Nature provides this in forests by depositing the leaves which have formed their summer clothing upon the ground beneath which most of the vitality is stored in the roots. They form a loose covering containing much air, thus securing several degrees of warmth to the surface below. In addition to the benefit thus derived, the decaying of the leaves supplies a top dressing of the best kind of nourishment for the future growth of the tree. Stable manure affords good protection, but is not so well adapted for affording nourishment. A compost in which leaves form the largest proportion, spread liberally, at least an inch deep, over the whole surface under the tree, to be forked in the following spring, will be highly beneficial. A tree may live and grow without these precautions, but its thrift will be greatly promoted by observing them.

What Makes a Bushel.

The following table exhibits the number of pounds of various articles to a bushel, and may be of interest as well as of use to our readers:

Wheat	60 lbs.
Corn, shelled	56 "
Corn, on the cob	70 "
Oats	36 "
Rye	56 "
Barley	46 "
Buckwheat	52 "
Potatoes	60 "
Onions	57 "
Beans	60 "
Bran	20 "
Cloverseed	60 "
Timothy seed	45 "
Flax seed	45 "
Blue grass seed	14 "
Hemp seed	45 "
Dried apples	33 "

Splitting of Forked Trees Prevented.—A correspondent of the *American Agriculturist*, to avoid the loss of forked trees liable to split, recommends twisting or winding together a few of the smaller limbs above the fork, which will grow in that position as the tree increases in size, and form a natural brace. He states that he has treated many trees successfully in this manner. We have prevented forked trees inclined to split, and even secured those that had already commenced to part, by boring through with an inch auger and driving in a strong wooden pin. A smaller iron bolt, with a head on one end and a nut on the other end, is even better. The new growth will soon cover the pin or bolt.

Hard Butter without Ice.—To have delightfully hard butter in summer, without ice, the plan recommended by that excellent and useful publication, the *Scientific American*, is a good one. Put a trivit, or any open flat thing with legs, in a saucer; put on this trivit the plate of butter; fill the saucer with water; turn a common flower-pot upside down over the butter, so that its edge shall be within the saucer and under the water. Plug the hole of the flower-pot with a cork, then drench the flower-pot with water, set in a cool place until morning, or if done at breakfast the butter will be very hard by supper-time.

How many of our young philosophers can give us a reason for this?

The Wool Clip of Ohio—will amount to nine million pounds and distribute among the farmers about four million of dollars.