

reared in Spain and (pure-bred descendants from these) in other countries for nearly or quite two thousand years. In that nature-favored land, with the prestige of former fame, and under the patronage of royalty, and aided by all that science and art could bring to its improvement, the Spanish Merino sheep laid broad and deep the foundation of a fame that seems destined to prove as lasting as the hills over which it roamed through a score of centuries. Fortunate it was that those who had the power to protect and the resources for improving those valuable flocks at once made them the special objects of care and pride, jealously guarding them against contamination by other blood, or deterioration in any of the essentials to a profitable fine-wool production.

From these Spanish flocks, attaining their highest excellence during the latter half of the eighteenth century, have sprung all the fine-wool varieties of sheep, however widely divergent their present types may seem.

Though closely guarded against exportation, under the impulse of selfishness and by stringent laws, so desirable an acquisition to the wealth of a country could not long be confined to Spanish territory. In 1765 a number of fine-wool sheep—supposed to be about three hundred—were taken from Spain into Saxony, where, owned and controlled by the royal families, they assumed certain peculiarities of form and fleece, materially differing from the parent stock. Some twenty years later (1786), the first importation of importance—some three hundred in number—was made into France. These also became the objects of royal care, and, through a system of care and breeding, assumed a changed type, and became the source of the French Merino.

Though a very few animals had been brought here previously, the shipment of Spanish Merinos to the United States really began in 1801-2, between which date and the year 1812 large numbers, probably as many as twenty thousand, were landed and scattered mostly through the New England and Atlantic States. Conspicuous in these importations, and mainly instrumental in their promulgation, were three of the representatives of the United States to foreign countries, viz: David Humphreys, Minister to Spain; Chancellor Livingston, Minister to France, and William Jarvis, Consul to Portugal. These far-seeing statesmen, moved undoubtedly largely by philanthropy and a desire to plant in the young republic the foundation of an industry which promised so much by way of advancing its wealth and independence, though not unmindful, it may be, of the opportunity of turning an honest penny for their own benefit, bought on their own account and for others large numbers from the best flocks of the kingdom, and sent them to the United States, where they were distributed at highly remunerative prices. In fact when the prices paid for many of these imported animals by the hopeful breeders of seventy-five years ago are considered, in connection with the scarcity of money and the narrow limits to which American agriculture was then confined, during

SHEEP, THEIR TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

NO. III.—THE FINE-WOOL BREED.

The origin of the fine-wool sheep—the Merino in its several varieties—so far antedates any known history as to preclude the possibility of enlightenment upon that point beyond what is furnished by conjecture. However interesting authentic information might be to the student of history, all that the practical breeder could realize from such knowledge is now vouchsafed to him by the knowledge that the descendants of admirable fine-wool sheep have been carefully bred and

no so-called "craze" of later years have prices run higher. Enormous prices were paid for single animals, while in some instances entire invoices brought an average of more than \$1,000 per head.

It is a fact to be recorded in its favor that the best specimens of fine-wool sheep have always commanded, in all countries where they have been introduced, prices that seem extravagant to the casual observer. From the palmy days of the Roman Empire down to the present, men have been found ready with the money and nerve to back their faith in fine-wool sheep of high excellence. Who is to say that in the main these men have not acted wisely? Who assumes to place a limit to the valuable results from a first-class ram, as his blood and excellencies mingle through the millions of sheep with which his descendants are brought into contact? Let the timid talk as they will about the folly of "fancy prices," but there still remains the fact that among the men, and in the localities where such so-called visionary prices have obtained, have always been found animals of the highest merit, when judged by a wool-bearing standard; and, whatever may have been the experience of certain individuals, no man can successfully deny that the country is richer and wool-growing more generally profitable than either would have been, had not the incentive of high prices—the knowledge that actual merit would be seen and appreciated, and paid for at its full value—been constantly in sight. Men will do much under the impulse of philanthropy, and the majority of them still more to gain personal renown; but the knowledge, or at least a reasonable expectation, that their work *will pay* will be found to quicken the pulse of the philanthropist and spur the ambition for renown with the best of men.