

wealth. Some old world homestead one is tempted to say at the first blush. Never were appearances more deceptive. The place is not above forty years old, and all that elaborate detail and substantial growth was in the beginning, simply the tussock plain unrelieved by a single tree or a solitary building; it has all been planted and laid out by the enterprising owner. At first the tenure was the leasehold of the pastoral run. Some of it is still of that holding, but the greater part, and the best part, is freehold acquired under the land laws of the past. In the distance the hill rises behind the homestead, and upon that hill are run the flocks during the summer months, the plains surrounding the homestead doing duty as winter country for the best part, a remnant running on the lower slopes and the more sunny faces of the mountain.

The place is typical: there are many of the same stamp through New Zealand, mostly situated on freehold property, and in every district there are some magnificent homesteads where country life is up to the ideal standard. Other places are of a different stamp, smaller, more under the immediate

ing stores to take advantage of a plethora of grass, or getting rid of them for the reverse reason; between dipping, watching for diseases from foot rot upwards, a contingency to which the farmer is very much more liable than his friend of the pastoral run, growing the incidental turnips and the rest, the business of sheep farming is a thing very different from what it was in the pioneer days when fortunes were made by the "Jumbuk" almost in the twinkling of an eye, and a good run was better than a gold mine any day of the week.

Then there is the care for the breeding. When Merino was the sole breed in the country, and a very paying breed at that, and the mountain pasture was practically the only pasture in use, the question of the breed of your sheep was comparatively limited. There were many varieties of the Merino from the large Rambouillet to the small Negretti, and rams from Germany and France, America and Tasmania and Australia were the subject of endless and most interesting discussion among the flockmasters. They are so now for that matter, but not to the same extent. The flockmaster now has to grow for mutton as

the side of the Longwools, they prevailed as a natural sequence.

Moreover there is much land in New Zealand for which the Merino is quite unfit, on which he perishes of foot rot, lung disease, and everything the ovine constitution abhors. For the farmer of the agricultural type the Merino sheep is an impossibility frequently.

Thus it came about that the Merino flocks of the colony gradually lost their premier position so far as the numbers are concerned. The position in April 1905, the date of the last figures on the subject published by the Department of Agriculture, is as follows:—the total number of sheep returned in the colony on that date was 19,100,000 (it has since risen to 20,931,000). Of these there were Merinos 2,238,824, and of all other sorts 16,852,800. Therefore, when the cable sends out the prices reached at the public sales the interest in Longwools felt in the colony is as sixteen to every two of Merino.

How this affects the future may be seen from the figures showing the proportions of the stud flocks maintained for every denomination of the sheep family. Merino stud sheep are some 12,000, and the others are, Lincoln, 98,900, Romney Marsh 141,000, Southdown 15,500, Miscellaneous 46,700. Thus we have over 600,000 Longwools in the stud department against 12,000 Merinos. The Merino stud flocks are only two per cent of the Longwool stud flocks, while the Merino ordinary flocks are 16.28 per cent. of the ordinary Longwool flocks of the colony. Evidently the Merino is destined to dwindle rapidly while the increase of the years to come must go on upon the lines of Longwool. The Merino, however, must always be with us for the simple reason that in the crossbreeding you cannot do without the Merino. The creature is needed for the quality of the crossbred wool, and it is the most valuable strain for that purpose. It may not be so when a settled type of crossbred sheep is reached. Some years ago it was thought by certain experts that such a type had been evolved and had come to stay. The new breed was known as the "Corriedale." Speaking in 1899, Mr. Murphy, the well-known authority, said guardedly of the

type, "Some breeders claim that the new breed 'Corriedale,' is a class of sheep that embraces the desired qualities, and possesses a fixity of type. The generally accepted meaning of the Corriedale is a sheep resulting from the fourth cross of half-bred Lincoln Merino and the rams Lincoln. The progeny of these is half bred. These in turn are bred, half-breds to half-breds, for four generations, and a Corriedale is the result. It was Mr. James Little, of Annandale, Waikari, Canterbury, who gave sheep bred on these lines the distinctive name of 'Corriedale' from the estate of that name in the Oamaru back country." The problem it was thought, in spite of the guarded reference of the above authority, had been solved by the man from Annandale. But the lapse of years did not confirm the sanguine estimate. Mr. Murphy, writing in the year 1905 in the Official Year Book of that year, said "The most profitable sheep for New Zealand is that which combines the best fleece and the most suitable carcase for freezing purposes together with early maturity. This is the class of sheep which some breeders have set themselves to produce. Whether such an



SHEEP ON TURNIPS.

management of the owners who do all their own work without the aid of a manager, riding round their paddocks, judging the condition and prospects of their stock and arranging all the various operations of mixed farming, which has on all the farming properties great and small taken the place of the ancient simplicity of the tussock farming. Artificial food is grown on every farm, turnips rape, oaten hay, mangolds; and the sheep is no longer the sole interest but has to divide the position with the rest, having become a link only in the chain of mixed farming. With the new system has grown up an easier method of handling sheep, with more certain results of musters. The stock are in paddocks of convenient size wire fenced. Even the mountain pastures are in most cases divided by the ubiquitous iron long drawn out, the lamblings are better, and a larger proportion of the increase is saved every year. On the other hand there is more labour in the business and more risk, except in the matter of the snow storms which do not bother the farmer as they do the run-holder. Between regulating the increase and securing the same, fattening the lambs in special paddocks, buy-

well as for wool, and the supremacy of the Merino is gone, for the Merino is a small sheep. Very toothsome he is truly, and when grown on certain hills where there is still a survival of the aromatic herbage of old, which used to flavour the mutton of the Shepherd Kings who were fond of pronouncing the same superior to the best Welsh and finer than the primest Southdown, he will hold his own with the true connoisseur. But markets have their fashions and their prejudices. It is out of the question to try and make converts for theories. The wise man takes the market as he finds it, making up his mind to supply its demands, as they are, leaving the question of working them up to what they might be to other people who have more money to lose and more experience to acquire. Moreover, the Merino is a slow maturing sheep, not being at his prime till he reaches the age of four, whereas the Longwools are mostly to be depended on for maturity within two years. It did not matter much so long as wool was the only object of the sheep farmer, but when mutton became a *sine qua non* the element of early maturity became decisive, and as the element of large carcase was on