should regard it as a public calamity were they obliged to farther abandon their business. I do not hesitate to go on record as saying, to those who have farms adapted to the business, and who like it, and have the experience quite likely to accompany such conditions, don’t abandon the business, expecting to easily find a more remunerative one, or one that always returns larger profits; and in closing let me say this: Don’t fail to put into the business all the intelligence and skill, in feeding breeding and handling, the times demand, and without which you cannot reasonably expect to succeed.

EXPERIENCE IN SHEEP-RAISING.

By W. L. Ames, Dane County, Wis.

Early Ancestry.—For twenty years past, I have had liberal opportunities for observation in the sheep line, and memory quite vividly accompanies me considerably farther back; yet not sufficiently far to recall any feature of the transaction whereby, for and in consideration of the sum of six dollars, my worthy ancestor became the possessor of four superlatively native ewes, averaging a fleece of less than two pounds, and with a weight of carcass correspondingly heavy. Such was the original and pioneer ancestry on the mother side of not only our present average yearly flock of 500 sheep, but of many hundreds disposed of on a mutton market.

Suggestions to Sheep-Breeders.—For several years past it has been my pleasure to be a sharer in not only the gains, but the losses connected with the handling and rearing of sheep. We lay no claims to fancy breeding, but breed and handle only our own product, and that only as any practical farmer may whose taste lies in that direction, who can appreciate their advantages in connection with good farming, and lastly, who can forego the pleasures of spending his time lounging on dry goods boxes and counters, and loafing on the streets of the nearest village, when he should be at home attending to his animals, which, in return for favors rendered him, are also dependent on him for a certain amount of care and attention—and generally to just about that extent that he cares for and attends to them, will they prove remunerative to him. Let him, who cannot this much deny himself, leave sheep husbandry to some one else.

Objects and Gains.—Our mode of management has been so odd in comparison with that of the majority of farmers, in so persistently and continuously clinging to sheep as a factor in our farming, that we may almost be considered eccentrics in that line, and these questions may very naturally arise: What have been your objects, and what your gains?

In answer to the first, I would say that we desired to improve on what was at our hand, and that there was room for improvement on such a quartetto of
Experience in Sheep-Raising.

Sheep as I have described, none can dispute. We also, at an early day, observed an economic relation existing between shepherding and grain raising.

Second, as to our gains, I consider that we have built up, out of this meager percentage on the one side, and improved males on the other, a flock of sheep worthy of fair consideration, and at the same time, have built up, out of sadly impoverished lands, a farm of nearly 400 acres, whose fertility and producing qualities, to-day, I believe, are second to not many, in this the hub county of Wisconsin.

Size, Wool and Numbers.—Our experience in breeding has thus far been entirely in the direction of fine wool sheep, and with three objects kept persistently in view, namely, size, wool and numbers.

As to size: From the diminutive maternal ancestry before mentioned, coupled with improved males, breeding only from mature animals, and by careful and considerate general management, we have secured a size in fine wool sheep that is most gratifying to us, and quite a source of comment from observers.

For several years past, our yearly mutton flock has numbered about 120, averaging at time of sale from 110 to 118 pounds. Of the three sires of our last three crops of lambs, we sold two not long since, one weighing 175, and the other 195 pounds, retaining for farther use the third, which weighs nearly 200 pounds.

In the wool line, the ideal toward which we earnestly labor is a long, fine, woolly wool, and a bulky, fleecy fleece, instead of a soggy lump, at the same time as weighty a fleece as possible without detriment to the above mentioned important properties. Of the three above mentioned sires, at our last shearing, two sheared 23 pounds each, and one 24. Our entire flock of about 400, averaged 9 pounds. The heaviest, though by no means the best fleece that we ever produced and sheared, weighed 29½ pounds.

As to numbers: We desire to carry as many sheep as will properly utilize such a proportion of the farm for pasture during the pasturing season that they may make the rounds of the farm ordinarily about once in five years. And farther, as one of our prime objects in continuance in sheep husbandry is for their renovating properties on exhausted lands, numbers with us have been an important consideration, and as no other breeds will compare with the fine wools for keeping in large flocks, that has been one of our reasons for so persistently clinging to that type of sheep.

How to Secure a Good Clip.—To produce and secure a clip of wool in good condition, requires much and untiring care. To prevent the accumulation of foreign substances in wool, certain requirements are almost absolute. Never feed under the grain measure or the fork; place the feed and then let the sheep to it. Never give them access to hay or straw stacks. Secure to them a dry place to lie so that the under parts of the sheep shall shear as freely as the sides. Avoid exposure to bleaching storms as much as possible when the wool is nearly grown, and to have a fibre of uniform strength requires uniformity of care, rations and general conditions.

Then if, for a clip of wool produced under the above mentioned conditions, we could secure a price based upon its real comparative merits with other competitive clips, instead of assigning to it an almost absolute and unconditional value, based upon an imaginary commodity called “washed wool,” there would still be some satisfaction in producing a clip of good wool.
Washed and Unwashed Wool.—
To illustrate the existing inconsistency, let me narrate a brief experience that has come to us within two years past: Two buyers called, examined our wool, and from their own thorough and personal examination considered it washed wool, although water had not touched it for at least two months previous to shearing, to say nothing about washing. They were unceasing in their compliments to the wool—how clean it was, etc.; but they found it a rather heavier grade than they wanted, and presented arguments to convince me that 8 pounds was heavy for washed wool, an argument that I had no grounds for disputing.

But I pressed them for an offer, which they finally made, 25 cents per pound. Before undeceiving them, I loudly denounced the unjust absolute discrimination between so-called washed and unwashed wool, to every word of which they assented, as did the school board in one of Carleton’s poems—“them’s my sentiments, too.” After disclosing to them the fact that the wool had never been washed, they could give but 17 cts., but were in too great haste to make the next point, to stop to close a bargain.

Economy in Sheep Husbandry.—
Our experience indicates to us that there is an economy in sheep husbandry worthy of careful consideration. There is still a class of farmers among us who make no pretensions to raising and selling anything from their farms except grain. And what is the tendency of such farms. So evident that a blind man can perceive it. Some such have already run their course and portions, at least, been abandoned. In contemplating, I am almost led to explain: Oh, destructive man, review some of thy works, and blush!

I believe I have not misrepresented, for we have had to do with at least two parcels of above described lands, portions of each of which had been abandoned to weeds, and although naturally of the best of soils, had become so attenuated in grain raising that they had all but failed to bring forth. We bought, seeded, and devoted to sheep pasturage for five years, and behold a magical change!

At that time a portion was hesitatingly disturbed and cropped, and produced most bountifully, although it was the first of the last two dry seasons. What did our sheep do for us in all this? Well, we bought cheap lands, but through the agency of our sheep, we harvested from those lands each year a bountiful crop of mutton and wool, without plows, harrows to cultivate, or expensive binders to harvest, returned almost element for element to the soil again, and in the meantime almost doubled the value of the land. Not a bad account for the sheep column.

Adaptation to the Business.—It is frequently remarked to us: “You seem to be more than ordinarily adapted to keeping sheep.” Not so. While to any man who says within himself, “somehow, I don’t like sheep,” I would say leave the handling of them to someone else then, yet there are many farms near us at the present time, on which sheep would pay better than they will on ours. The more impoverished the land, the more evident their renovating properties. Of late, our sheep remain out continuously during the grass season without disturbance from dogs or wolves. For relief from the latter try “scare crows.”

Sheep and Weeds.—Nothing has as yet equalled sheep in clearing land of foul plants, such as burdocks, pitch fork, etc. We were once the happy possessors of a patch of Canada thistles which defied all efforts at extermination until
we were able to bring our sheep to bear on them, when, with a mixture of sheep and salt, they yielded at once.

Value of Sheep to Land.—A neighbor not long since proposed to us to rent some land that he was interested in, and put our sheep on it. During the conversation mention was made of re-numeration at the rate of 3 dollars per acre. I did not question him closely, but suppose he meant to pay us that amount for the use of our sheep on each acre occupied. But we were loth to let them go at that price as we have some use for them yet ourselves.

Ticks and Contagious Diseases.—To ticks we are strangers, not one having appeared on our flock for many years. Fair keeping, handling only our own product, and one dose of tobacco juice administered fully 20 years ago, have been our only actions against them. Neither have we any experience whatever with contagious diseases among sheep. Among our sheep to-day is not one poor in flesh nor one from whose pelt the wool has started.

Element of Success.—One of the principal elements of success in any line is patient continuance. He that continually jumps from one line of business or breeding to another, endeavoring to follow all the freaks and turns of trade, will not infrequently find himself left when he arrives at the coveted point, and the will-o-the-wisp beacon will again appear in another direction. Thus far I consider that we have followed sheep husbandry with certain purposes in view, and while success has attended our efforts to an extent fairly gratifying to ourselves, yet not sufficient to warrant us in folding our arms at this point and exclaiming, good enough! But rather, that experience, which has become ours only by years of labor and close observation, only armors us for renewed efforts in a line in which, in connection with clovering, lie resurrecting properties to many an exhausted acre.

THE HANDLING OF SHEEP.
By C. A. HATCH, Richland County, Wis.

Third Paper.

General Management.—Successful sheep farming depends on the close and careful attention to three essential points, viz: Breeding, feeding and the handling, or general management of the flock, aside either from breeding or feeding. A farmer may be a good breeder, and also a good feeder, and yet come short of success for want of good management. By management, I mean the selection of the flock to start with, the culling out of inferior and unprofitable individuals, which is so essential to permanent success, dividing for wintering, marketing wool and mutton, etc. Then let us first consider

The Selection of Breed. — Neatness to market, number to be kept in one flock, kind of buildings to be used as winter quarters, and skill of the shepherd, must be taken into account in determining which of the