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The Rural Post.

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Group of Little Faith. A group of little faith, but with a true heart, they are the backbone of the nation.

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However, as years passed on, conditions changed. The American war ended, so that there was again time to cultivate the southern cotton fields, the product of which once more came into competition with wool, the consequence being that wool fell off in price, and sheep-farmers in the States—see George Waring, jr., says in his "Handy-book of Husbandry"—slaughtered hundreds and thousands of sheep for the pelts alone, and the farmers turned their attention to other branches of industry. With us such wholesale slaughtering did not take place, though for some time the business was but fairly profitable. A few years later on a change for the better took place, when the British market became available for our surplus best wools and mutton sheep. Since then the production of good mutton and early-maturing sheep has been the aim of those who bred from a financial standpoint. It is all very well for wealthy independent farmers, or for men who retire from business and farm for pleasure, to breed whatever class of animals they take a fancy to, but for those of us who are obliged to farm for profit fancy must be bridled out of sight, and that class bred which is most in demand, providing that we have the facilities to do so. For various reasons but comparatively few farmers can raise pure-bred sheep with success. One reason is that breeders, like poets "are born, not made." Another that capable persons have not the necessary capital, or having the capital, are not located in a district suitable for the breed which they wish to invest in. It certainly are not equally suitable for the different breeds, and I have no doubt the time will come when each will find its place, just as they have found it in Britain. To say which is the best of the existing breeds, either pure, or for crossing purposes would require great converse, but this much can be safely said that when wool made the money long-wooled heavy-shearing sheep gave the best returns, but now

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P.R. is doing us in Ontario a present injury. This, like many disappointments, may yet grow a "Blessing in Disguise." It is important to us that we have a coat as well as a suit to compete with the North-west farmers for our best market, or in foreign markets, we certainly can grow beef and mutton of such quality, and at a cost that will enable us to successfully compete in the best markets with any country under the sun. This brings us back to our subject, and the next thing to consider is how are we to produce the required mutton sheep? The remarks we should make in answering this question will apply to pure-bred sheep. While it is absolutely necessary that the ram we select should be of a fixed type, it does not follow that the ewes should be so, nor would it be profitable, as it is only animals that have been bred pure for many generations, that will ensure invariably qualities may be, and therefore are more valuable to produce breeding stock than mutton sheep. The general points of a good flock of ewes are: good size, full chest, well-sprung ribs, medium bones, heavy fleece of good quality, prolific nature, and a disposition to mature early. If a flock is deficient in any point, a ram in which this point is fully developed should be used. Breeding Age. Ewes should not be bred until they are about 10 months old, and except in the case of valuable ones should after two or three years be fed off for the butcher. Rams are used from the age of eight months to eight years and over. There is a great difference of opinion about using lambs. I think that an early well-developed lamb is quite as capable, without injury, to serve a limited number of ewes as a stately-careful ram. I have known one—Shropshire Down—to get 10 strong lambs in one season and to be useful the next, but fifteen ewes is the outside number to which one should be used, and if moderately worked as a shearer will be in his prime when from two to four years old. Time of Coupling.—Much depends on the object of breeding. He with the thoroughbred who figures in the show ring will have the ewes mated in September and October that the ewes may drop in February and March, and the person who aims at supplying the market with early

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lamb does well to have them drop about the same time. For those who are without reach of a good market I think the above a capital plan, as the ewes not having lambs to suckle during the summer improve in condition and so require but light feeding in winter, and the culls are easily fitted for sale; but for the farmer who sells his lambs later on or who keeps them over till the following year, the proper time to couple them is after the middle of November. The lambs then drop late in April when the grass is soon ready for them. In this way a flock can be cheaply wintered, and with plenty of grass, but little grain is required. The objection to this method are, that it is somewhat difficult to have the ewes in good wintering condition and also to get the culls into good shape to sell. These are, however, more than counterbalanced by the facts that less care, less grain, and less expensive buildings are required. Care of Rams.—If the ram is young, or though full grown, if the flock is large, he should be kept in a separate pen, and turned out with the ewes for an hour or two daily. In a small flock it does not seem necessary to keep the ram apart except when being fed. Care of Pregnant Ewes.—If put into winter quarters in good flesh there is no reason why the ewes should be lightly fed. I fully believe that more loss of valuable sheep and lambs is caused by stuffing them by starving at that time. The grass cut a little green and well saved, fed in the morning, not more than two pounds of turnips each at noon, and good clover hay (if mostly alike all the better) fed at night will give satisfactory results. Mangolds fed previous to lambing are injurious; timothy hay is not good, and the dry straw of wheat, oats and barley are poor feed for sheep at any time. Breeding ewes should not be closed in a warm house, but should be kept in a separate place from horses, cattle, etc., where they can have plenty of exercise and also have a clean dry place to lie on. Lambing Time.—For early lambing a warm place is indispensable, as a newly dropped lamb would soon perish in frosty weather if exposed. Though among the most helpful and universal of first lambs in a short time out to be strong and healthy, if a lamb gets chilled a good remedy is to rub it with warm water—hot as the hand will bear—and when revived through with soft cloths and afterwards with hot water from a fire. Warm brandy, even if the flock and cold, but not deeply chilled, put a ewe having dropped lambs in this is not to be despised. Because of the cutting of the ewe she will not lick them and op-

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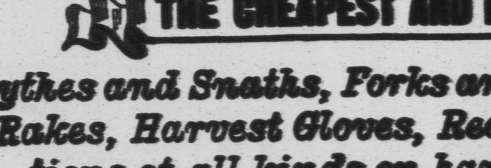
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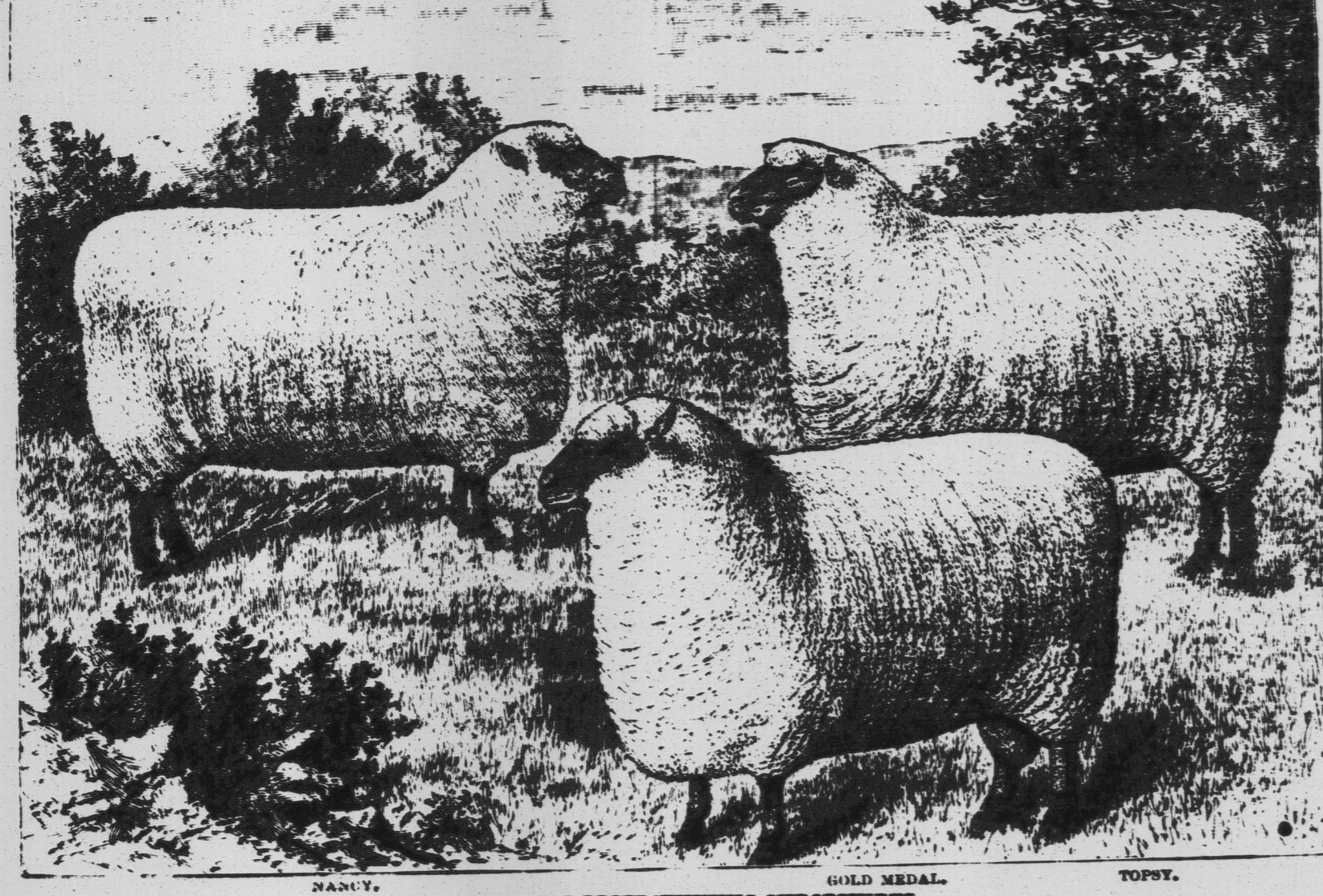
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GROUP OF PRIZE-WINNING SHROPSHIRE. The property of John Campbell, Jr., Woodville, Ont.

number of rams among the ewes, the chances are that if he buys them, and when only partly fat, they will drop lambs which he does not want, which spoils them also for carrying over. As to the operation itself it should be done early, but not until the docked tail is healed. When it is considered that sheep in Ontario are so very free from disease of every kind, that the labor in attending them is so light, compared with that required for cattle, that they give returns twice a year, that it is so convenient to have a sheep or lamb at hand to dress during the warm weather, when fresh meat is a luxury in many farmers' homes, and that the Americans draw so largely upon our flocks for breeding stocks, the wonder is that any farm throughout the length and breadth of our fair province could be found without its flock.

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