



THE HOG.

It is only a few years since it was very common to hear an expression signifying that the breed of a hog is in the food he gets. This notion has been to a great extent eradicated, but is not yet without advocates. There are still some who do not believe there is anything in the breed, because they "can't see how it is." But there is no reason for denying the fact. They can't see how it is that in a parcel of pear seed—all of which to outward appearance are just alike, and probably would appear so by the nicest chemical test—some will produce fruit the most delicious and melting, and others, with precisely the same advantages of soil and culture, fruit which is the most crabbed and austere. They can't see how it is that the bear should line and cover his carcass with fat to an amount nearly equal to half his whole weight, and which supplies his lump of life for five months in the year, while the wolf and the fox remain gaunt and lean. They can't see how it is that the same kind of food when eaten by the ox, the turkey, or the common fowl, produces meat which to human taste is of very different qualities.

All these facts are obvious, yet we cannot see their causes, nor fully understand them. All we can say is, they result from the varied nature of things. They show, however, that there is in the original germ of plants and animals, a principle which produces certain peculiarities greatly affecting, in many instances, their value for the purposes of man. This principle is not only manifested in the characteristics of different species, but exists more or less in varieties of the same species. We see its effect in the different kinds of wheat, and other species of grain—in varieties of peas, beans, apples, potatoes, etc., and in the peculiarities of the different varieties of the hog, and other domestic animals. It is a man's business to study these peculiarities, and secure and apply them in those ways which will render them most subservient to his wants.

Geological researches have proved that the hog is one of the most ancient of mammiferous animals. His fossil bones have been found in various places, associated with those of the mastodon, dinotherium, a gigantic species of deer, and other animals long since extinct. An able zoologist (Martin) observes: "Of the identity of these bones with those of the ordinary wild hog, all doubt has been removed by the most rigorous comparisons." The same writer remarks: "It were useless to ask how it is that while the mammoth and the mastodon, the urus, the huge red deer, the gigantic cervus megaloceros, hyenas, enormous bears, and powerful feline animals, have perished in times geologically recent, the wild hog continued its race. We cannot solve the mystery. It has escaped the fate of these animals—its contemporaries—whatever might have been the cause of their own annihilation, and though no longer a tenant of our Island (Britain), it is spread throughout a great portion of Europe and Asia."

The hog is not a native of America. The South American peccary, though of the same order, belongs to a different genus. But in the uncultivated parts of Europe, Asia and Africa, the wild hog has existed from time immemorial, and no less than eight species are enumerated by naturalists as inhabiting these countries.

The domestic hog was evidently derived from the wild, though it can hardly be supposed that any one species of the latter has been the parent of all the domestic breeds. On the contrary, the great diversity of characters, which the domesticated animal presents in different countries, is probably in a great degree due to its affinity with various original stocks. Experiments have proved that the domestic hog is capable of breeding different wild species, and that a prolific offspring is the result.

The subjugated animal is very different in his disposition and instincts from his untamed ancestor. The common hog is as dependent as most other domestic animals. In his natural state, on the contrary, he is sagacious, bold and independent.

When of mature age, and in possession of all his faculties, he acknowledges no superior, and will not turn from his path for the proudest beast of the forest. Even the tiger and lion have found themselves unable to withstand his furious charges, and have been laid in the dust by wounds from his formidable tusks.

But the domestic hog soon regains many of the primitive habits of the race when allowed his liberty in stations where he can supply himself with food. The semi-wild character of the "woods-hog" of our Southern and Western States shows this. Even in his ordinary bondage he is by no means the stupid and senseless animal which some have imagined him. He frequently manifests considerable intelligence, and his intellect is capable of great development. Every body has heard of "learned pigs," which, among other tricks, would spell out various names by arranging the letters of the alphabet. Pigs may also be encouraged to defend themselves against other animals. We saw not long since an advertisement of a "fighting pig," weighing forty pounds, which was offered to be matched against any dog of any size. A more extraordinary instance of the education of this animal is that of the "sporting pig," described in Daniel's Rural Sports. This animal, a black sow, called Slut, was actually broke to find and stand game like a pointer dog. She was of the sort of swine which run in the new forest, so-called, where they chiefly obtain their support. She was trained by the brothers Toomer, game-keepers to Sir Henry Mildmay. After a few weeks' trial, according to the statement, "she would retrieve birds that had run as well as the best pointers, nay, her nose was superior to the best pointer her trainer ever possessed, and no two men in England had better." She appeared to take great delight in hunting, and often went alone, the distance of seven miles, from the residence of one of the Toomers to the other, "as if to court being taken out shooting. She lived till she was ten years old, and was then killed because she was suspected of having aided in the disappearance of sundry lambs. She had got fat and sluggish, and weighed 700 pounds.—Stock Register.

Sheep Husbandry.

THE WOOL OF MERINO SHEEP.

In the N. Y. Tribune, Hon. George Geddes gives the following recapitulation of certain views held by him as to Merino sheep and wool.

1. There has been, during the late "sheep fever" a bad fashion of breeding for an excessive quantity of grease, yolk and wrinkles, into which a large majority of flock masters have fallen, partly led thereto by a lack of discrimination by the buyers of wool between dirt and filth and something that can be made into cloth. There are many signs of the times that this bad fashion is about to die out, as inconsistent with profit to either grower or manufacturer of wool.

2. Merino sheep should be bred with reference to the production of that combination of the greatest length of staple consistent with the thickest and most compact fleece that covers all parts of the sheep. To more fully explain this point, I will state that the original coarse-wooled sheep of Germany had only 3,500 fibers to the square inch of the skin. When those sheep had been bred toward the Merino, grades of the third or fourth cross would have about 8,000; the twentieth cross, 27,000, and the pure blood Merino, sometimes has from 40,000 to 48,000 fibers to the square inch of his skin. (Fleischman's Report.) As to length, I am informed that the wool of about one year's growth, on some of the sheep that Col. George Campbell of Vermont took to the World's Fair, and on which he won the prize at Hamburg in 1863, had the extraordinary length of from 3 1/2 to 3 3/4 inches. This is much beyond the average of the largest fleeces. Two and a half to two and three-fourths inches must be considered long wool, if the fibers stand very thickly on the skin.

3. The fibers of wool that are in diameter so small that it requires more than 500 to measure an inch, were by the older writers, classed as fine wool, and they found some that was so fine that it took nearly 1,000 fibers to measure an inch. Some years ago Dr. Henslow measured some wool under the microscope, that was grown by Dr. Randall in Cortland Co., N. Y., that was much finer than any before reported. Some of it required 1,500 fibers to make an inch. 4. To produce strong, sound, and

true wool, continued good health of the sheep that bears it is necessary, and liberal and uniform good keeping during all the year is imperatively required.

5. Sheep that are protected from the storms of all the year will produce a softer and more healthy wool than those that are exposed to the weather. There will be more oily matter in the wool of the housed sheep; but the wool will be sound to the very tips, and the more perfect protection from changes of the weather conducing to more uniform health, has a tendency favorable to uniformity of growth.

Poultry.

Points of Excellence in Fowls.

Extract from address of Hon. J. Gould recently read before the New York State Poultry Society.

The best form of a bird of any breed is that which contains the greatest weight in the smallest relative compass. This rule is one of universal application, and every departure from it, however slight, will work a proportionate deterioration of the true value of the birds.

When absolute excellence is valued by a scale of fifteen points, from three to five of these points are given for size alone. Now it is very clear that size alone, without reference to the symmetrical arrangement of the matters which constitute the bulk, may be an injury rather than a benefit. A symmetrical Polish cock will weigh between five and six pounds, and a hen between four and five pounds. The wings, the legs, and the muscles are nicely proportioned to bear this weight; but if by over feeding or by tricks of breeding, the cock is made to weigh seven or eight pounds, he at once takes five points out of the fifteen. Why is this? In the first place, the legs, wings and muscles are compelled to bear a heavier weight than they were intended to bear, which is a disadvantage and not an advantage. It is not contended by any one that a hen that weighs a pound or two more than another one will necessarily lay a greater number or a greater weight of eggs than a smaller one. All the superiority, therefore, in an extra pound of flesh, or perhaps of bone, is at the utmost measured by the price that this extra pound will sell for in the market. Suppose that it turns out as the result of experiment that this extra pound costs more to put on than the market price; surely then it cannot be considered that this extra weight is a merit, it must rather be looked on as a demerit. I am not able to assert that extra size presupposes extra cost. But I can truly say that the experience of my whole life teaches me that compact, symmetrical birds that contain the greatest weight in the smallest compass, will lay on a given weight of flesh with less food than larger birds in which the flesh and bone and viscera are unsymmetrically distributed.

The compact form that I advocate is always associated with great relative breadth across the shoulders; the ribs stand out squarely from the back bone, thus making a large cavity for the lungs. As the last processes of digestion are completed in these organs it follows that the work of assimilation and digestion can be carried on with least disturbance where this cavity is large and where ample room is afforded for the play of all its functions. There are many other advantages arising from this form which I would not stop to particularize. I have only called your attention to this one point in order that you may see that this rule is not an arbitrary one, but has a deep physiological significance, which indicates that it is intimately connected with the economical value of the bird.

Sat and Humor.

"A man sold a farm a few days since as 'perfectly level.'" The buyer went to look at it, and found a mountain on it. "But," said the man, "the land will be perfectly level after you take the hill away; I sell you the level land underneath, and throw in the mountain!"

"You have been sorely tried," said a sympathizing friend to Joe Crowden, weeping over the coffin of his third wife. "Yes," responded the bereaved one, "I have always had the dreadfullest luck with women."

The moralist's observation.—Severe Church woman: I didn't like the sermon at all. It was much too broad. Lively Niece: Well, auntie, I'm sure you can't say it was as broad as it was long!

A pretty rich young widow was regarding herself lately at a mirror in her chamber, when the maid time trying on her widow's cap. "Behold," she exclaimed, "the real cap of liberty!"

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J. QUINN THORNTON, ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW. Office, in Patton's Brick, State street, Salem, Jan 27-73.