

What is Pure Breed?

A considerable amount of nonsense finds its way into type, respecting what are termed pure breeds of domestic animals. Such questions as the following are constantly asked: "Are Brahmas a pure breed?" "Are Black Hamburgs a pure breed?" &c., &c. These queries obviously owe their origin to a confusion of the distinction that exists between different animals, and between different varieties of the same animal. Let us illustrate our meaning by an example or two.

A hare is a pure-bred animal, because it is totally distinct from all other animals, or, as naturalists say, it constitutes a distinct species. It does not breed with other animals, for the so-called leporines are only large rabbits; and if it did, the offspring would be a hybrid or rascal, and almost certainly sterile or incapable of breeding. In the same manner the common wild rabbit is a pure breed. This animal possesses the capability of being domesticated, and, under the new circumstances in which it is placed, it varies in size, form, and colour, from the original stock. By careful selection of these varieties, and breeding from those individuals which show most strongly the points or qualities desired, certain varieties, or as they are termed, breeds of rabbits, are produced and perpetuated. Thus we have alterations in the length of the ears, in the colour of the fur, in the size of the animals, and so on. It is obvious that by care, more new varieties may be produced and perpetuated. Thus, by mating Silver-greys of different depths of colour, a white animal with black extremities is often produced, and has been perpetuated by mating them together. Now, in the strict sense of the word, no particular variety of rabbit can be said to be a pure breed, as, like all the others, it is descended from the wild original. In the same manner, we may deny the applicability of the term pure breed to the varieties of any domesticated animal, even if, as in the case of the dog or sheep, we do not know the original from which they descended.

All that can be asserted of the so-called purest bred variety is that it has been reared for a number of years or generations without a cross with any other variety. But it should be remembered that every variety has been reared by careful artificial selection either from the original stock or from other varieties.

In the strict sense of the word, then, there is no such thing as an absolutely pure breed—the term is only comparatively true. We may term the Spanish fowl a pure breed, because it has existed a long period, and obviously could not be improved by crossing with any other known variety; in fact, its origin as a variety is not known. But many of our domesticated birds have a much more recent origin. Where were Game Bantams fifty years ago? The variety did not exist. They have been made by two modes: breeding game to reduce the size, and then crossing the small game fowl so obtained with Bantams. Yet Game Bantams, as at present shown, have quite as good a claim to the title of a pure breed as any other variety. In fact, every variety may be called a pure breed that reproduces its own likeness true to form and colour.

The statement that Brahmas, Black Hamburgs, Porks, &c., as pure breeds is meaningless. If it is intended to imply anything more than that they will reproduce their like, which a mongrel cross between two distinct varieties cannot be depended on doing. There is no doubt but that many of our varieties have been improved by crossing with others. The cross of the bulldog, thrown in and bred out again, has given stamina to the greyhound. And although generally denied, there is no doubt but that the Cocker has in many cases been employed to give size to the dorking. In the same manner new permanent varieties of pigeons are often produced, generally coming to us from Germany, in which country the fanciers are much more experimental than in England, where they adhere to the old breeds with a true John Bull or bulldog-like tenacity.—*The Field*.

THE BRAHMA FOWLS.—We think the Brahmas (especially the dark), are the coming fowls, and well worthy the attention of poultry-rearers this spring. To those who do not wish to part with their barn-door hens, we commend the following.—A Brahma cock of ours was sent to a cottage with barn-door fowls last summer. Some eggs were set. The produce turned out to be uncommonly good-looking—and they laid all through the winter, when eggs were selling at 1s.4d. a dozen, and common hens were laying none. They also became "clockers" or sitters a week or two ago, when all in our part of the country were in search of hens for setting, and could not obtain them.

If any one wishes a nice-looking, useful hen, we have seen nothing that we can recommend so much as a cross between a Brahma cock and common barn-door fowl.—*Scottish Farmer*.

The Apiary.

Bees do not Injure Delicate Fruit.

I having been asked by a verbal member of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society that bees seriously injure grapes and other delicate fruits, a committee was appointed to investigate the subject. In answer to a call upon him, Mr. DANIEL GARD of Cincinnati, writes as follows:

In response to the request for my opinion as to the benefit or injury arising from the honey bee being kept near vineyards and fruit gardens, and if the honey bee punctures the grape and other delicate fruits, I must admit I once entertained the erroneous idea, derived from the opinion and prejudice of others—that bees were injurious to grape culture and wine making. I have, however, long since changed that opinion, and now, from a knowledge of facts, observation and experience (having several colonies of bees), I believe bees do not—can not, puncture fruit, they having only a tongue or proboscis with which they suck nectar and gather their food. (For an illustration of this fact, see a magnified representation in Langstroth's most valuable practical treatise on the "Hive and Honey Bee," page 217.)

In times of scarcity of other food they avail themselves of the work of wasps and other insects, that cut and puncture the ripe, tender, juicy fruit.

My vineyard and wine press are very near my bees, and I have not lost or been annoyed by their depredations, but I have by wasps, hornets and yellow jackets.

Bee keeping, and a study of their wonderful sagacity, nature and peculiar habits, are very interesting, and should be regarded as an intellectual department of rural economy, and properly managed, may be a source of remunerative profit. Bees agitate and carry pollen from flower to flower, and thus promote fecundity and improvement of fruits and flowers, and very properly deserve the attention of our valuable institution, the Horticultural Society.

I observed last season—the most disastrous to bees I ever experienced—the white clover, a principal bee feed, and for best honey, disappeared. I believe from drouth, and more speargrass appeared in lawns and meadows than before. The locust blossoms, a very important support of bees, and for honey, only partially opened and dropped from the trees before expanding. So this year, now the white clover is abundant, and springs up after the speargrass is cut. The bees swarm late, but are now encouraged, and gather and store beautiful white honey very fast. It seems, from instinct, they knew they could not support an increase, and did not. I saw no drones. The male bees—that do not work—and even old colonies, as well as those imprudently divided, had to be fed at great expense, or perished.

It would be profitable to introduce for bee pasture the Dutch white clover, a medium size between our common white and larger red clover, that affords greater quantity of nectar, but cannot be reached by the tongue or proboscis of the common bee. I have sowed some this spring as an experiment.—*Country Gentleman*.

The Household.

Fault-finding with Children.

Mrs. H. B. Stowe, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, thus exposes this common mistake. "Children are more hurt by indiscriminate, thoughtless fault-finding than by any other one thing. Often a child has all the sensitiveness and all the susceptibility of a grown person, added to the faults of childhood. Nothing about him is right as yet; he is immature and faulty at all points, and everybody feels at perfect liberty to criticize him to right and left, above and below, till he takes refuge in callous hardness or irritable moroseness."

"A bright, noisy boy rushes in from school, eager to tell his mother something he has on his heart, and Number One cries out—'Oh, you've left the door open! I do wish you wouldn't always leave the door open! And do look at the mud on your shoes! How many times must I tell you to wipe your feet?'"

"Now there you've thrown your cap on the sofa, again. 'Where will you learn to hang it up?'—'Don't put your slate there; that isn't the place for it.'—'How dirty your hands are! What have you been doing?'—'Don't sit in that chair; you break the springs, bouncing.'—'Mercy! how your hair looks! Do go up-stairs and comb it.'—'There, if you haven't torn the braid all off your coat! Dear me, what a boy!'—'Don't speak so loud; your voice goes through my

head.'—'I want to know, Jim, if it was you that broke up that barrel that I have been saving for brown flour.'—'I believe it was you, Jim, that hacked the side of my razor.'—'Jim's been writing at my desk, and blotted three sheets of the best paper.'—Now, the question is, if any of the grown people of the family had to run the gauntlet of a string of criticisms on themselves equally true as those that sainted unlucky Jim, would they be any better natured about it than he is? No, but they are grown up people, they have rights that others are bound to respect. Everybody cannot tell them exactly what he thinks about everything they do. If every one did, would there not be terrible reactions?"

Cool Water.

At this season of the year a cool draught of water is a luxury which we may enjoy with a little care.—By the following method, simple and inexpensive, water may be kept almost as cold as ice. Let the jar, pitcher, or vessel used for water, be surrounded with one or more folds of coarse cotton, to be constantly wet; the evaporation of the water will carry off the heat from the inside, and reduce it to a low temperature. In India and other tropical countries where ice cannot be procured, this expedient is common. Let every mechanic and laborer have at the place of his work two pitchers thus provided, and with lids or covers, one to contain fresh water for the evaporation, and he can always have a supply of cold water in warm weather. Any person may test this by dipping a finger in water and holding it in the air on a warm day; after doing this three or four times, he will find his finger uncomfortably cool. This plan will save the bill for ice, besides being more healthful. The free use of ice water often produces derangement of the internal organs, which, we conceive is due to a property of the water, independent of its coldness.—*Maine Farmer*.

IRON DISH CLOTH—IRON CLOTHES LINE.—Like yourself and your "Constant Reader," I was once so ill-informed of the progress of the fine arts as not to know what an iron dishcloth was. But seeing one in use at the house of a friend, I learned from a young Swiss gentleman, who had presented it to her, that they were in general use in his native country, and he had accidentally seen a cask full at an importer's, which were unsaleable in New York, and had become rusty, and looked upon as old iron. I procured a dozen and distributed them among my friends. They soon became bright from use, and are universally classed among the articles which we wonder how we ever did without. These are made of rings of iron wire, No. 15, linked together, and are about six inches square. I counted fifteen rings on one edge. One outside row of rings is only connected with the other at each end and an inch or two in the middle, which makes two in the middle, and forms two loops to hang it up by. Every kitchen maid who has scoured the inside or outside of a kettle with it, pronounces it better than scraping with a knife or scouring with cloth and sand. They are very flexible and I imagine must be like chain armor, which I have read of, but never seen. We also find it useful to put under a pot, or kettle hot from the stove, when we wish to place them on a table. We have used ours two years.

There is another iron convenience I have used six years, and which is as good as ever, that I would recommend to housekeepers—galvanized iron, telegraph wire for clothes lines. It never rusts, need never be taken in, never breaks down and lets the clothes fall to the ground and have to be rinsed again. I hope my experience may be of some use to your readers, and to your paper. I feel much indebted for valuable information on various subjects.—*M. S. T. in Country Gentleman*.

FURNITURE VARNISH.—A correspondent says, when black walnut or mahogany-coloured furniture becomes discoloured or damaged, any one may, at a very small cost, "shine it up," like new. Provide a few cents worth of burnt amber and Indian red. For mahogany colour, mix Indian red with copal varnish till the right colour is secured; thin with benzine, and add a little boiled linseed oil if it dries faster than desirable. For black walnut colour, mix both pigments in such proportion as is necessary.—*American Agriculturist*.

DAUGHTERS LAMP OILS.—The following is suggested as an infallible method of detecting dangerous lamp oils.—Take two teaspoonfuls of boiling water and one of cold, mix together in a small basin, dip out a cupful of the mixture, and pour in its place a teaspoonful of the oil to be tested. Apply a blaze, and the dangerous oil, or those capable of igniting below 120°, will immediately take fire. Others will not ignite.—*Prairie Farmer*.