

GOSSIP.

At the annual sale last week of Berkshires from the herd at Biltmore Farms, Biltmore, N. C., 49 head sold for \$5,172, an average of \$106; highest price, \$400; lowest price, \$30.

In the olden days of whitewashed chapels, a minister went into the Little Bethel and found the workmen, with their caps on their heads, working their white-washing brushes up and down the walls to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel." He was shocked. He said: "Take your caps off, and, if you must sing, sing hymns." The next day but one he found the brushes moving very slowly on the wall to the tune of "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne," and he saw that very little work had been done; so he said to the workmen: "Put on your caps and get back to the old tune, or we shan't have the place ready for Sunday." No doubt the whole incident passed without any sense of humor between them.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SEX CHARACTERISTICS.

By J. McCaig.

Apart from a knowledge of breed characteristics and differences which are valuable and necessary to the breeder of pure-bred stock, there is much to learn from sex characteristics and differences. An animal may be just as badly out of character with respect to sexual properties as with regard to breed properties, and this defect is no less a hindrance to successful breeding.

The practical and important thing to remember is that there is such a thing as male and female type, and that we should study and observe to get a just appreciation of these. In this view the features that go to make up male expression must not only not be undervalued, but should be sought for and insisted upon. Heavy manes in horses, strong horns in the horned breeds of sheep, heavy crests in bulls, and all such features are in order, and their absence is a defect, as they bespeak appropriate male constitution. If the scientist were to translate such inappropriate lack of male properties into a practical breeding principle, he would say that the lack of organic capacity in such male to develop exuberant features would indicate a want of power in him to produce variation in the offspring; in other words, to STAMP HIS OFFSPRING with special character. This scarcely needs scientific interpretation to the experienced breeder, as he never fails to choose a sire of strong male individuality if he wants to transform his herd or flock.

A female may be similarly out of character as respects sex characteristics. In contrast to the male, she should be marked by a characteristic simplicity and unattractiveness, or perhaps we should say plainness. This difference has strong confirmation in the popularity of a string of exhibition males over a string of females.

This difference has its origin in what may be called natural selection rather than in sexual selection. In a state of nature there is obviously an advantage in the plainness or want of prominence in the pregnant or brooding female, if we extend the discussion to birds. There is another difference which may be referred to the same principle. Besides being more attractive, males are usually stronger and more active than females, which is due to the offices of defence and nourishment devolving on the males. This is no longer a consideration with animals under domestication. It is still the case, however, that the property of QUIETNESS AND PASSIVITY that would be no fault in a female would be out of character in a male. A sluggish stallion or an awkward or ambling bull or ram would not be chosen by an experienced breeder for a sire. Thus it appears that the differences that have arisen between the sexes in their evolution have become permanent, and are important principles in breeding practice.

In noting a few of the qualities that belong to males and females characteristically above, it is not the aim of the writer to give an exhaustive list of these, but to establish a belief in their fundamental utility and importance.

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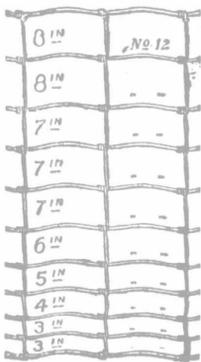
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