

THE
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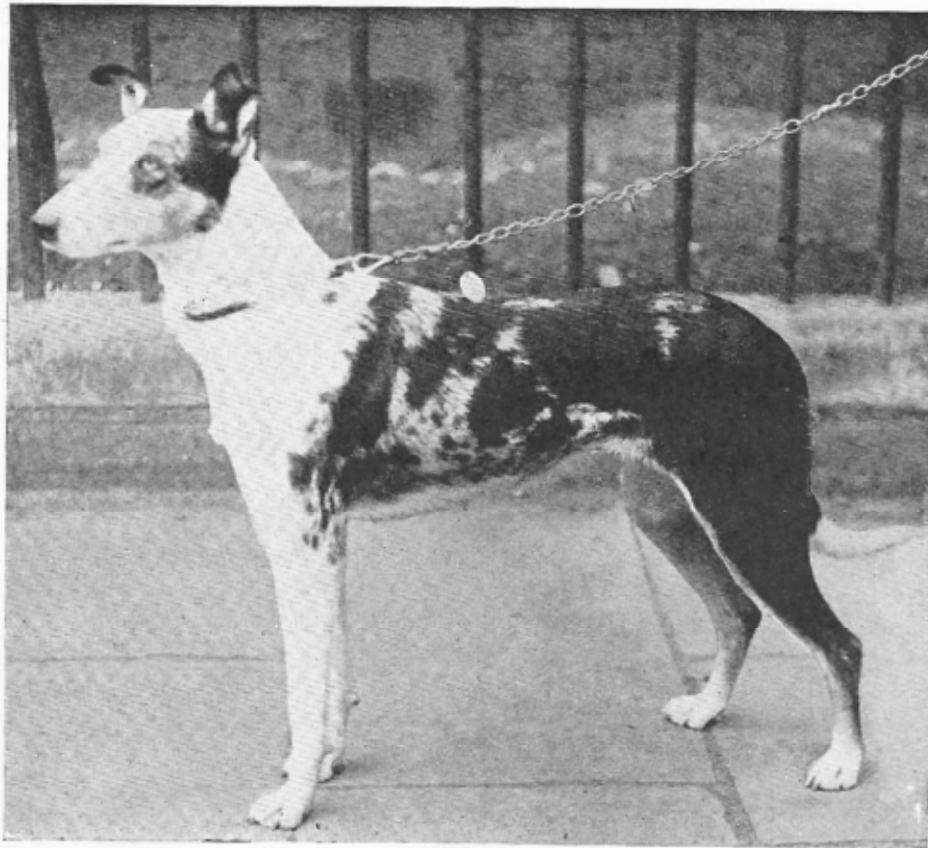
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fathers and grandfathers, those who were dependent upon him could be sure of quite a good sum of money if they would but consent to part with the dog. It may well be that some of the proudest tenants of the modern show bench would show descent from a sheep-stealing generation if their pedigree travelled back far enough. Happily for their reputation, sheep-stealing was already a thing of the past when the Collie Club was founded in the early 'eighties.

The cult of the collie has taken a strong hold upon the public, and there are very

when it comes to the work for which practical men must rely upon their collies, there is very little doubt about the dog that will come out first. It will not be the artificially lengthened one, but the dog whose shape has been fixed by Nature for the work she wishes him to do, the dog trained to endurance from the time when he was picked out of his mother's litter as the one best fitted to survive, and trained with more care than kindness for the tasks before him.

The collie most in favour among shepherds and farmers in the north country is the



SMOOTH-COATED CHAMPION "STOCKPORT BLUE BLOSSOM."

Winner of first prize at the Southern Collie Club Show. Owner, Mr. H. Harrison.

many famous specimens to be seen to-day at the great shows. The late Mr. Panmure Gordon, who had so many dogs, included some striking collies in his collection. Mr. Pierpont Morgan is another very successful owner, and some years ago Queen Victoria was to be reckoned among successful exhibitors. But it must not be forgotten that nearly all prize dogs would be beaten in open competition at sheep trials. Their ears may be better, their forelegs straighter, their backs shorter, and their coats immensely superior to those of their workaday cousins of the wild border countries, but

bearded collie, which looks like a long-tailed English sheep-dog, and, as far as my experience goes, is so devoted to his duties and his rightful owner that he regards the rest of humanity with suspicion. He is a rough-looking fellow at best, whose shabby and shaggy appearance would earn the contempt of his more pampered but less able cousins of the show bench. It is likely that the more ornamental dogs will have lost most of their early instincts in the course of a few generations. At the sheep-dog trials, still an annual feature of rural life in remote corners of the country, the

bearded collie can hold his own against all competitors of his own family, and other sheep-dogs will find him hard to beat.

The bearded collie is not taken very seriously in clubland, where rough and smooth collies divide the attention and admiration of the breeders. There is a Rough Collie Club and a Smooth Collie Club, but the two sorts are so closely connected that you may find a puppy of one sort in a litter of the other. An examination of the points by which both varieties are judged shows how closely they are related.

In each case the eyes should be almond-shaped and set obliquely in the head. The ears of rough collies and smooth must be small and sensitive, thrown back in repose and half erect when the dog's attention is attracted. A long and arching neck is required from both species, each must have the back long, the loin arched, the chest deep. The legs must be straight, long, and muscular, the coat very dense, and the undercoat abundant. The standard height is the same for both, bitches being about two inches shorter than dogs, the average height being twenty-two inches to twenty-four inches for the latter. The points are revised from time to time by those who exercise a controlling voice in the clubs.

The likeness that the bearded collie bears to the old English sheep-dog, from which it differs chiefly in not being bob-tailed, has been commented upon already. Opinions as

to the origin of the bearded variety differ considerably. Some think that it is a reversion to one side of the parental line, while others hold that it is product of the union of an old English sheep-dog and a collie. The point is not worth labouring, because we cannot hope to solve the problem. Suffice it that while rough and smooth collies are becoming domestic pets, the bearded variety—cross-grained and ill-tempered though he be—is undoubtedly doing excellent work in the Scottish Highlands as a sheep-dog pure and simple. But for his services, the toll that the snowstorm takes, when it comes suddenly to hillsides where the sheep are straying, would be very considerably augmented. While rough and smooth collies will respond in some fashion, however slight, to the advances of their master's friends, the bearded collie, so far as my experience goes, acknowledges none save his master, and will even bark or growl at other members of the family. He seems restless and unhappy in the house, but as soon as his foot is on the hills, he is a different dog, with a sense of responsibility that is quite unmistakable. His are none of the graces belonging to his cousins, the rough and smooth collies, but in the Scottish Highlands graces are a little out of harmony with surroundings, and the plaided shepherd "blowing of his nails" is quite happily associated with the rough, surly, bearded collie.

TOUCHSTONE AND AUDREY.

THE dowagers behind their fans
All wonder what I see in her;
If envy could forbid the banns,
Ours until Doomsday they'd defer.

"My dear, her eyes are simply green!"
"Her hair is golden? Once 'twas red!"
Thus vials of envenomed spleen
They pour in whispers on her head.

But for their sneers I nothing care,
Laugh to the echo at their spite;
Let them abuse her eyes, her hair—
I've got her heart, and *that's* all right!

ERNEST BLAKE.