

THE  
DOGS OF SCOTLAND:

THEIR VARIETIES, HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS,  
AND EXHIBITION POINTS.

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## CHAPTER X.

## THE HIGHLAND OR BEARDED COLLIE.

THE Highland or bearded collie is quite a different animal from the common collie, although their duties are similar. In form and colour of coat the Highland collie is not unlike the English or Welsh bob-tailed sheep dog, only that his tail is entire. That the two breeds have had one origin is, looking at their structural peculiarities, we think, undoubted. A big, rough, "tousy" looking tyke, with a coat not unlike a door-mat, the texture of the hair hard and fibry, and the ears hanging close to the head, is a rough and ready description of this dog. The breed is a familiar one to us. Its origin is unknown. That the dog belongs to a mountainous country and a cold climate his dense, shaggy, and harsh coat testifies. His heavy build, powerful limbs, and thick short neck, are characteristics found in all animals which inhabit a mountainous country with a cold, damp climate, *e.g.*, our Highland ponies and cattle. His skin also resembles these animals in being very thick. The more we consider the matter the more are we convinced that the English or Welsh bob-tailed sheep dog and the bearded or "hairy-moued" collie are identical. In build, shape, coat, and general character they are the same, only that our Scottish dog is seldom seen with a "bob"-tail; but from what we see from time to time in the fanciers' papers about manufactured bob-tails, we do not place any value or special point on this.

In the "Sportsman's Cabinet" (1804) there is an illustration of an English sheep dog, which would pass for a Highland collie. In the text we are told that

“the breed is propagated and preserved with the greatest respect to purity in the Northern parts of the kingdom, *as well as in the Highlands of Scotland*”; so that we have evidence that the breed existed in Scotland at the beginning of the century.

Whether the bearded collie originated in the Scottish or in the Welsh mountains we are not prepared to say. That the dog is a distinct breed, and not a cross with the otterhound or deerhound and the rough-coated collie, as suggested by Dalziel in his first edition of “British Dogs,” there can, we think, be little doubt.

A very interesting letter on this variety appeared in the *Live Stock Journal* of November 15th, 1878. The writer, Mr Gordon James Phillips, Glenlivet, describes this breed as “the rough-coated collie,” having a tail which is simply a stump. This we have found very rarely in a pure Scottish bred dog, but in other points we are in accord with Mr Phillips, and have pleasure in giving his letter in full:—“The origin of the rough-coated collie is more difficult to trace back to its native wilds than any other dog that we know. It forms a small minority among shepherds’ dogs, and it is seldom, if ever, seen pure bred in the north of Scotland. Nature, however, has given it marks which cannot be effaced, which help to unravel the mystery which envelopes its nativity. These are its shaggy coat, the thickness of its skin, and the formation of its limbs. The thick skin and the shaggy coat point unmistakably to its being the native of a mountainous country. Glancing for a moment at other animals that are natives of Scotland, and marking the resemblance between them and the rough-coated collie, we are inclined to think that it also is Scottish. Take, for example, Highland cattle and Highland horses. They have the rough

coat, the short thick limbs, and the thick skin, and in their own characters the same amount of endurance. The only plausible argument against this collie being Scottish is its scarcity in Scotland. This may be accounted for, however, when we take into consideration the fact that the black-and-tan collie is better adapted than the rough-coated collie for the ordinary work about small farms, such as driving in and out cattle, sitting beside a few sheep, and so on. It is also more easily trained for work of this sort. This would naturally make the black-and-tan collie a greater favourite with farmers than its rough-coated neighbour. Within the last few years, however, sheep have become more valuable, and the rough-coated collie has again become fashionable, shepherds preferring it for its endurance of cold and fatigue and its ability as a driver. Shepherds also affirm that for sheep it is, on the whole, the best dog.

“The animal itself is about the size of an ordinary collie, but a good deal deeper chested. As already mentioned, it is thicker in the skin; it is also flatter in the forehead. Altogether the head would be somewhat repulsive looking if it were not relieved by the beautiful dark brown eyes. Its greatest peculiarity in form is in the tail, which is simply a stump, generally from six to nine inches in length. That the animal is of Scottish origin, owing to its resemblance to other Scottish animals, is apparent, if we compare it with the Scots terrier, which it resembles very much in colour—a dark grey. At all events, the black-and-tan collie, now common throughout Scotland, would be much more at home in the southern part of the island than in the north. It cannot endure the same amount of cold. In winter it has a great inclination to get near the fire,

and is generally shivering; whereas the rough-coated collie seldom draws to the fire, but seems to be at home amongst the drift and snow. It is finely adapted for hill climbing, owing to the strength of its limbs and the depth of its chest. Shepherds have an idea—which on the whole is not a bad one—that it was intended by nature to be specially a sheep dog, owing to its short tail, which does not let it turn so swiftly as it would otherwise do if gifted with the long tail of its brother collie. To understand this it is necessary to know that when shepherds send a dog to hunt sheep they desire it to take a wide circle round, not to dash in amongst them. The black-and-tan collie must be trained to do this, but the rough-coated one must make a wide sweep owing to the stump. Perhaps better proof exists of its being specially a sheep dog when we consider its aptitude for driving. Shepherds state that they can safely trust 200 or 300 sheep to the sagacity of this valuable dog, which does not hurry or push, but drives them as coolly and as cautiously as if its master were present. Another proof is that it will not follow game. The black-and-tan collie, if it sees a hare, will dart away after it at its utmost speed. Most dogs will do so, but it is different with the rough-coated collie. If a hare starts up amongst its feet, it will simply look after it with a scared-like look, and then move on its way again.”

No other breed of dog shows the same peculiarities as the one we have under notice, and, although he is not to be found in plenty anywhere in Scotland, he is by no means a scarce animal, and when classes have been provided at Glasgow and some of the other west country shows they have been generally well filled with

specimens of merit. In build, shape, and temperament the bearded collie is quite different from the rough-coated collie. So far no standard has been drawn up for these dogs, but, in keeping with other parts of this work, we have prepared a standard, which is as follows:—

The *Skull* flat, broad, and rather heavy over the eyes, covered with long hair of hard texture.

The *Muzzle* heavy, of moderate length, tapering slightly to the nose, which is black.

The *Eyes*, moderately full, vary in colour according to the colour of the dog's coat. A wall or "china" eye is peculiar to the mired colour, but a dark brown eye is what is generally seen. Light yellow eyes are objectionable.

The *Ears*, which droop, are of moderate size, well covered with hair, and carried close to the head.

*Neck* of medium length, thick, and well covered with hair; chest very deep; shoulders oblique.

*Legs*—The fore legs straight, with plenty of bone and muscle, heavily covered with rough hair, and hind legs also heavily covered with hair.

*Feet* oval, toes arched and close, sole well padded.

*Body* more short and compact than the common collie; chest deep and wide, the ribs well sprung. There should be no inclination to droop in hind-quarters.

*Tail* of moderate length, bushy, and carried low.

*Coat* very profuse, hard and wiry in the outer coat, with a tendency to waviness or curl; inner coat short, soft, and close.

*General Appearance*.—A big, rough-coated, clumsy-looking dog, with rather large head, sleepy look, and a peculiar action when running.