



THE Montreal Canine Association held its first members' night in the rooms of the Natural History Society on the evening of Thursday, 11th inst. Mr. W. Ormiston Roy, who had the honor of reading the first paper, was met with a good audience, despite the stormy nature of the weather, and he treated his subject—the collie—to the pleasure and satisfaction of all present. Mr. Reid, the president of the association, was in the chair, and in introducing Mr. Roy, stated that he hoped this was only the beginning of a long series of talks on dogs, as the object of the association was to diffuse knowledge of the various breeds amongst the members, and to increase their sympathies, if possible, in behalf of man's best friend and companion.

Mr. Roy prefaced his remarks by apologizing for the incompleteness of his paper on the subject, owing to the somewhat short time he had had for preparation. In part, he said: The following remarks on the rough-coated Scotch collie are offered, not with the intention of enlightening collie men, who are more familiar with the subject than I am, but with the object of bringing up some of the characteristics of the breed, and perhaps interesting a few who are not yet familiar with the many good points of a collie. The origin of the Scotch collie as a breed, it seems, is not known. He appears to be the result of careful selection of the most useful and sagacious dogs, owned and bred in the pastoral districts of Scotland for several hundred years. At all events, he is peculiarly Scotch, and is acknowledged by all to be a dog of wonderful intelligence. Few breeds have attained such popularity as the Scotch collie, and from his attributes this is little to be wondered at. He has been constantly growing in favor with lovers of good dogs in every country, and this, no doubt, is the cause of our seeing him so often out of his latitude. Indeed, it is a much debated question whether the prize collie, as he stands to-day, would be of much use as a sheep-dog at all, so long has he been bred for showing purposes alone, and unaccustomed to his former occupation.

He is still full of intelligence, lithe, graceful and handsome, but it is feared that his great popularity for the last decade, and the consequent breeding and inbreeding for beauty, has had a tendency to overlook the useful side of his career, and has been the means of dwarfing his sheep-folding instincts. I have met with few Scottish shepherds who would be willing to undertake their former arduous duties with what they call the narrow-brained dogs of the show-ring. Nevertheless, there are collies which are still the shepherd's most useful helpers, and to witness the marvellous efficiency of these dogs, in the Scottish Highlands, or on the great sheep ranges of Colorado, no one would think they had lost any of their inherited instincts and almost human skill. They have even adapted themselves to the stockyards of the West, and when the avenues of those yards are alive with countless flocks of sheep, the vigilant collie may be seen guiding every movement of his flock, and ever on the alert, directing them straight to their destination without losing track of a single lamb, nor allowing a strange one to mix with those he has in charge. No doubt these practical, every-day, working collies are still selected and bred for the special requirements of their country and the work they are called upon to perform, and are not discarded nor thought the less of because they do not resemble the collie of the show-bench, or because their ears may not be shaped and carried in the latest style. In the Highlands of Scotland the collie is the shepherd's constant companion, sharing with his master every meal, and treated as a member of the household, and even in some of the remoter districts, with the family attending divine worship. Of this feature of the collie's life and creed Dean Ramsay, in his "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," tells the following story:

"Scottish congregations in some parts of the country contain an element in their composition quite unknown in English churches. In pastoral parts of the country it was an established practice for each shepherd to bring his faithful collie dog, at least it was so

some years ago. In a district of Sutherland, where the population is very scanty, the congregations are made up one half of dogs, each human member having his canine companion. These dogs sit out the Gaelic services with commendable patience, till towards the end of the last psalm, when there is a universal stretch and yawning, and all are prepared to scamper out, barking in a most exciting manner whenever the blessing is commenced. The congregation of one of these churches determined that the service should close in a more decorous manner, and steps were taken to attain this object. Accordingly, when a stranger clergyman was officiating, he found the people all sitting when he was about to pronounce the blessing. He hesitated, and expecting them to rise, till an old shepherd, looking up to the pulpit, said: 'Say awa', sir; we're a' sittin' to cheat the dowsers.'"

The Ettrick shepherd, in his day, claimed to have the best collie dogs in Scotland, and he has recorded in his tales many marvellous feats performed by his own and other dogs. Of the utility of the Scotch collie, he says: "A single shepherd and his dog will accomplish more in gathering a flock of sheep from a Highland farm than 20 shepherds could do without dogs; and it is a fact that, without this docile animal, the pastoral life would be a mere blank. Without the shepherd's dog the whole of the mountainous land in Scotland would not be worth a sixpence. It would require more hands to manage a flock of sheep, gather them from the hills, force them into houses and folds, and drive them to markets, than the profits of the whole flocks would be capable of maintaining. Well may the shepherd feel an interest in his dog; he it is indeed that earns the family's bread, of which he is himself content with the smallest morsel, always grateful, and always ready to exert his utmost abilities in his master's interest. Neither hunger, fatigue nor the worst of treatment will drive him from his side; he will follow him through fire and water, as the saying is, and through every hardship without murmur or repining, till he literally falls down at his feet. If one of them is obliged to change masters, it is sometimes long before he will acknowledge the new one, or condescend to work for him with the same intelligence as he did for his former lord; but if he once acknowledge him he continues attached to him till death."

Sheep stealing, when offenders in the