

THE MASTIFF.

"Grasshopper," in London Live Stock Journal

Those people who have seen the Mastiff described by some ancient writers as a dog used for hunting wild beasts must be somewhat staggered when they look at the show bench winners which bear that name in the present day. There is, however, some similarity in the animal which existed a few centuries ago, which is to be observed from the illustrations which were given at that time, but with the change the mode of sporting, the extermination of wild beasts in Great Britain, the institution of dog shows, and the consequent disuse of the Mastiff for hunting purposes, the entire nature of the animal became altered. It is probable that it was due to the show bench that this came about when the craving for exaggerated properties turned the active dog into the cumbersome and sleepy monster which is to be seen reclining in luxurious ease at the Crystal Palace or any of the other Kennel Club exhibitions.

The antiquity of the breed has never been questioned, it being amongst the earliest of any class of dog which is spoken of in this country. With the Bull dog it is considered by some to claim an equal right to the title of the National Dog of Great Britain, but as there seems to be reason to suppose that both these animals were at one time very nearly related, the right may have been absolute, and, at one period, they were one and the same animal, which man, by careful selection, has converted into two distinct types of the canine race. There are, however, amongst the most prominent prize Mastiffs now extant indications that the Bull-dog character has not been entirely eradicated.

Fashion during the past decade has displayed its subtle influence, and the Mastiff of to-day has reverted much more nearly to an enlarged Bull dog than when dog shows first came into notice. The projecting under-jaw, turned-up nose, wide skull, short back, and straight hocks having, in many instances, taken the place of the more symmetrical formation of such dogs as we were accustomed to see a few years ago descended from the celebrated Lyme Hall strain.

Opinions differ as to whether Crown Prince, who represents the Bull dog type, and is somewhat of the character of Mr. Edgar Hanbury's Wolsey, or Maximilian, who more nearly resembles the style of Miss Aglionby's Turk, is the more correct form for a Mastiff. Judges, however, appear to be deciding in favor of the former, although as far as appearance and beauty of contour are concerned, it cannot be questioned that the latter bear off the palm; but it remains to be seen whether the defective points now so apparent in many of the most successful prize-winners will eventually be bred out, and the same perfection of form be established in the new dog which was conspicuous in that of five or ten years back.

Whilst on the subject of the Bull-dog character, which has been introduced into the modern Mastiff, it is as well to mention that many breeders are greatly opposed to it, and that they still adhere to the old style. The supporters of these views certainly appear to have reason on their side, as it can be of no advantage to the Mastiff, which is now only used as a guard or a companion, to be under-shot, or to possess the points of a Bull-dog, which animal is admitted on all sides to be most ungainly both in its appearance and movements.

It is only a few years ago that Champion Turk, Green's Monarch, and The Shah were considered the *beau ideal* of all that was good in dogs of the breed, and yet they are all distinctly different in formation to Crown Prince, Orlando, and Pontiff. Again, there is Mr. Taunton's Cardinal, who stands forth a bright example of a large dog who, in shape and muscular development, cannot fail to please

those who look upon a dog as an animal to be formed on orthodox lines, and not as a creature to be converted into a mass of deformity to suit the whims and fancies of a few breeders.

There can be no doubt that in the head of each variety of dogs is to be found the distinctive features which mark the characteristics of its breed; so the head of the Mastiff is the first and most important point to consider. It is large, square, and massive, the skull being flat and broad, but not receding, the face a medium length, with broad muzzle, particularly across the top, and a good depth of chop. Squareness of muzzle is a most important feature, as a dog may be tolerably long in face, if he has width of muzzle, and yet be superior to one which is shorter in head, but is cut away too much below the eye. The eyes are dark-hazel in color and a medium size, and the ears rather small and placed rather high, close to the head, the neck strong, but not showing any dewlap, the shoulders also powerful, and placed well back with well sprung and deep ribs carried far back to the flanks and joining a strong loin to rounded quarters, with plenty of muscle in the thighs, it is in this last named point that so many otherwise good Mastiffs are defective.

The tail, which should be carried low, must be very strong at the root, and have no curl or inclination to turn upwards at the end. The body, taken as a whole, should be lengthy, and placed on limbs with heavy bone. The chest of the Mastiff may be slightly wide, but the animal must not be out at elbows, and, above all, the limbs must be straight, the hinder being well bent in the hocks, which must not be turned inwards, but in a straight line with the feet, which, both before and behind, must be set up on nicely-rounded toes. After admitting that there is always great difficulty in rearing puppies of so large a breed as that of the Mastiff, there are still far too many young dogs put upon the show-bench, which are so defective in their limbs and thighs as to render them little less than deformities, and it is against encouraging such that judges should make a firm stand.

The most fashionable colors are fawn and brindle, the former light, with black ears and muzzle, the latter deep and rich. There are, however, various shades of brindle admitted, and dogs that are fawn with little, if any, black markings are accepted, but there can be no doubt that when the markings are correct the beauty of the dog is greatly enhanced.

Undoubtedly the most successful Mastiff which is now living is Crown Prince, not only on the show-bench but as a stud dog, in which capacity he does not transmit his pale face and Dudley nose. There are, of course, exceptions to the rule, but there are more than sufficient winners recorded in the stud-book to admit of the above remark. It cannot be said, however, that he is equally fortunate with his other great defect, that of straight hocks, as in many of his best produce, the failing is prominently shown. In the death of Emperor a great loss was sustained by Mastiff-breeders, as it was through him that the character of the present type of Mastiff might have been improved, it is somewhat extraordinary that from the same bitch two animals so different in shape and character as Crown Prince and Maximilian should have sprung.

As the sire of Cambrian Princess and many other winners, Beau must not be passed over unnoticed, and of the brindle division Cardinal has a string of winners attached to his name, Champion Lily II., with Commodore, being his best representatives. Amongst the chief breeders are:—Dr. Sydney Turner, Messrs. Mark Beaufoy, W. K. Taunton, E. Nichols, R. Cook, John Evans, J. Hutchings, Lord Arthur Cecil, and H. G. Woolmoore.

FARMERS' HELP.

Maryland Farmer.

The labor question among the farmers comes up regularly every year, and always with increasing interest. It is very true that the great increase of labor-saving machinery renders the subject less formidable than in past years, and as this machinery is gradually being provided at very reasonable prices, the necessity of the employment of many laborers is done away with, while only a few intelligent skilful men are actually needed even for large farms.

We can remember when on a 200 or 300-acre farm, harvest time used to bring from 30 to 40 stout, hardy men, with scythes and cradles and reaping hooks, to be paid by the farmer high prices, and to worry the farmer's wife and daughters by hard labor to feed and care for them by day and by night. That time is departed. The rattle of the mower and the reaper, and the steady tramp of the team—and the grass is spread to the sun and the grain lies bound in the field.

Yet the farmer must have help and he should secure good skilful men and employ them all the year round at moderate wages. If steady employment is provided such can easily be found; but when men are employed only a part of the time, when the demand is heavy and the work hard, the farmer must take what he can get and pay whatever is asked. The true policy is to pick out steady, pleasant-speaking, moral men—such as you are willing to have talk freely before your children—in the dull season of the year, make your bargain with them for the whole year's work, and keep them in your employ as long as possible. There is always plenty to do on the farm, whether in the winter or the summer, and you can always make improvements which will require the labor of your help continuously, to the profit of both yourself and them. We believe this to be the only true method of solving this question which so troubles the farmer every summer. Seed time and harvest are not the times to employ help; they should have been employed in the autumn, kept at work all winter in the fields, in the barns, in the orchards, in the gardens; hauling fertilizers, removing stones and stumps, laying drains, renewing fences, planting large trees, in a word preparing for the battle as the spring opens and the summer approaches. In these respects good help will repay all the extra outlay even in these winter months, and then you have just the help you need when the busy months come, or you must otherwise pay any price which is asked, for strange men and unskilled labor.

Then this is better for the laborers themselves. It gives them a good home, something permanent, and places them always upon their honest manhood as to conduct, conversation and devotion to the farmer's interest who employs them. We advocate this system of employment of farmers' help, then, on account of the benefit it bestows both upon the farmer and on the laborer. Also, because it is the real solution of the great question as to the procuring reliable and skilful labor when most needed by the farming community.

Peas contain more than double the digestible albuminoids (the most important and costly element of animal food) of oats and more than a hundred per cent. higher nutritive ratio. Like English bean meal, our pea meal is considered the strongest horse food. It has a somewhat constipating effect upon the digestive organs, and it is therefore advisable to mix eight bushels of peas with eight bushels of Indian corn and one bushel of flax seed, and grind all together. The flax seed counteracts the constipating effects of the peas, and the mixture has a slightly higher nutritive ration than oats. I have fed this ration with much satisfaction.