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**British dogs; their varieties, history, characteristics,
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London, The bazaar office, [1879?]

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Item: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/60065>

Article/Chapter Title: British Dogs

Author(s): Hugh Dalziel

Page(s): Page 366, Page 367, Page 368, Page 369, Page 370, Page 371, Page 372, Text, Illustration, Text, Page 373, Page 374

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CHAPTER XXV.—THE IRISH TERRIER.

BY CORSINCON.

THE enthusiasm characteristic of Irishmen has, within the last few years, brought this terrier to the front with a dash.

Lovers of the breed, those who best knew its inherent good and useful qualities, worked hard, and patiently to gain for it public recognition as a distinct variety, and laboured long before success crowned their efforts.

Many influences hindered the advance of the Irish terrier in public esteem, and not least among these may be reckoned the internecine war carried on in the public prints by the fanciers of the breed, with all the gusto with which Irishmen are supposed to fight.

The law of compromise in debateable points was at first ignored, and, it is to be feared, is still but partially recognised and acted upon among them, although the formation of the Irish Terrier Club has done wonders in welding into unanimity opinions and prejudices which it appeared impossible to harmonise.

If the leaders themselves were for long irreconcilable in their opinions as to what an Irish terrier was, or should be, it is not to be wondered at if this added to the confusion in the public mind. Classes for the breed were instituted at the principal Irish and some of the Scotch dog shows, and as every Irishman who owned a terrier thought—and small blame to him—that he possessed the genuine article, the benches were filled with animals of the most astonishing diversity of character; and the critics and the public, who looked at them as the supposed representatives of a distinct breed, were principally struck with the intense mongrelism exhibited by them as a whole.

The impression thus produced was greatly strengthened by the contradictory decisions of judges; and I confess that, between the war of words raging between breeders and the eccentric awards alluded to, it was some considerable time before I could get fixed in my mind the ideal of an Irish terrier as now accepted by all the best breeders and exhibitors.

Of those who have done so much to popularise this useful hardy terrier,

I may mention as among the pioneers Messrs. Morton, Erwin, Ridgway, Montgomery, Jamison, Crosbie Smith, and Dr. Marks, some of whom are still prominent in the fancy with their able coadjutors in forwarding Irish terrier interests—Messrs. A. Krehl, G. R. Krehl, Despard, Dr. Carey, and others.

The first practical step that produced marked results in consolidating the conflicting interests and influences that had previously hindered the true progress of the breed, was the drawing up of a standard, agreed to and signed by twenty-five breeders and exhibitors, for publication in “Dogs of the British Islands.”

“Stonehenge” had refused to recognise in his book a dog about which no two seemed to agree, and which he believed in no way differed from the old Scotch terrier commonly met with in England in the early part of the present century.

At the request of some friends—Irish terrier fanciers—I endeavoured to mediate in favour of a recognition of the breed in so important a work, and found that the author had taken the wise resolve to publish, on condition of a standard being drawn up and agreed to by a sufficient number of breeders, so as to ensure unanimity. The next important step was getting separate classes instituted for them at Kennel Club shows, and in the attainment of this end I also had the pleasure of acting as an advocate. These classes filled well, and with a higher bred and more level lot than I had ever previously seen shown, and led, I think, to that most important step, the formation of the Irish Terrier Club, which has done so much to improve and popularise the breed. To Mr. G. R. Krehl, I believe, belongs the chief honour of founding the Club, and certainly to his untiring energy much of its success is due.

In general appearance the Irish terrier is not taking, except to the eye of those who can detect merit under an unpolished exterior; but as so many warm and generous hearts beat under “cloth of frieze,” so under the rough unkempt coat of the Irish terrier there is a spirit of “derring-do,” a strength of affection for his master equal to his pluck, and a stamina that carries a little racing-like wiry frame through the hardest of days.

As a terrier he is bred too large for going to earth after the smaller vermin, but for all above ground work he is unexcelled, although *not* as injudicious admirers will have it, unequalled; added to his undeniable

“varmint” look, his racing build shows speed and nimbleness, most useful qualities in rabbiting, ratting, and kindred sports. They are excellent, too, as water dogs, and the coat short and hard, with a close soft inner jacket, is a first rate wet resister.

Irish terrier fanciers have not been free from the weakness of claiming for the breed a long and pure descent.

Mr. Ridgway says: “It is a pure breed indigenous to Ireland,” that it “has been known in Ireland as long as that country has been an island, and I ground my faith on their age and purity on the fact that there exists *old manuscripts in Irish* mentioning the existence of the breed at a very remote period.”

Surely man never yet “grounded his faith” on a more slender basis. The patriarch Job, in an old manuscript written in a language older than Irish, refers to the “dogs of his flock,” so when his descendants take to sheepdog showing they may “ground their faith” in the antiquity and purity of their colleys by Mr. Ridgway’s example, and with as much logical and historical support. In English manuscripts of the 13th century, the existence of terriers in this island is referred to, but which, if any, of the numerous varieties we now have, approach in form the dog of that time it would be difficult to say.

No matter whether the terrier under consideration was “indigenous” to Ireland, or whether he is of still more ancient blood, a true Milesian engaged in worrying Grecian rats before Ireland was the island of the Irish, Mr. Ridgway did a vast deal better service to the breed by drawing up a standard of excellence and code of points descriptive of the dog than by vain attempts to prove his long and pure descent.

It has been felt that the descriptive points, originally drawn up by Mr. Ridgway, and agreed to by twenty-four others, is scarcely elaborated enough for the increasing difficulties that arise in distinguishing between merit when the competition is close, and I therefore have pleasure in submitting remarks on the breed, and a more minute description of points drawn up by Mr. G. Jamison.

These I place following those of Mr. Ridgway as given in “Stonehenge’s” work, and as I think there is a tendency to swerve from the original lines, which is very different from a necessary elaboration of points, I offer comments, explanatory of my own views, leaving readers interested in the breed to form their own conclusions.

As I understand the club are about to frame a standard and code of points, and that those of Mr. Jamison's may form the basis of discussion, I venture to point out what appears to me a danger of altering the character of the dog as at present recognised, and *sure* (if I may use an Irishism) that would be a sad thing to befall a dog so ancient and pure that he has been referred to in old manuscripts in Irish.

Mr. G. Jamison writes :

“The Irish terrier, as his name denotes, is the representative of the Emerald Isle, and specially suitable for his native damp country, being able to stand much more wet, cold, and fatigue than most other terriers ; the coat is so hard and flat on the body that wet cannot penetrate, and, not being too long, does not hinder them in cover work. This breed is more used as vermin destroyers than for any other purpose, which principally accounts for breeding for size being neglected ; however, within the last four or five years the breed has been much closer looked after, and at the present time there are a number of these dogs that in point of show qualities approach as near perfection as most breeds. There are a certain number of enthusiasts who have been writing this breed up in fancier papers as the only genuine working terrier ; this, of course, is nonsense ; at the same time it is a recognised fact that from their peculiar hardy and active habits they at least are deserving of a front rank among working terriers. In the beginning of the year 1879 the Irish Terrier Club was inaugurated for the protection and breeding of pure specimens ; the club has been the means of the breed being brought more prominently before the public.

“Head. Skull must be flat and moderately narrow between ears, getting narrower towards the eye, without much stop ; the jaw must be strong and muscular, not too full in the cheek and of a fair punishing length, but not so fine as a black and tan or white English terrier ; there should be a little falling away or chiselling out below the eye, so as not to give a greyhound appearance ; teeth should be strong and level ; nose must be black ; eyes generally of a dark hazel colour, small, and full of life and fire ; ears, when uncut, small and V shaped, of moderate thickness, set well up on the head, and dropping forward closely to the cheek ; the ear must be free of fringe and the hair thereon shorter and generally darker in colour than the body ; as long as the present demand for terrier character is prevalent we are afraid the adversaries to

cropping will have a poor chance in the show ring, for undoubtedly cropping gives character and smartness of appearance.

“Neck. Should be of a fair length and gradually widening towards the shoulders, well carried, and free of throatiness.

“Shoulders and chest. Shoulders must be fine, long, and sloping well into the back, the chest deep and muscular but not broad.

“Back and loin. The back should be strong and straight, with no appearance of slackness behind the shoulders; the loin broad and powerful and slightly arched; ribs well sprung and well ribbed back.

“The hind quarters. Well under the dog, should be strong and muscular, the thighs powerful, hocks near the ground, stifles not much bent.

“Stern. Generally cut, should be free of fringe or feather, set on pretty high, carried gaily, but not over the back or curled.

“Feet and legs. Feet should be strong and round and moderately small, toes arched, and neither turned out nor in; black toe-nails are preferable, but of little value over light ones. A much greater objection is white toes; once white toes are thoroughly got rid of, there will be very few light coloured toenails; legs moderately long, with plenty of bone and muscle, must be straight viewed from all directions, the elbows working freely just clear of the side; pasterns short and straight, hardly noticeable; both fore and hind legs should be moved straight forward when travelling, the stifles not turned outwards, the legs free of feather and covered, like the head, with as hard texture of coat as body, but not so long.

“Coat. Hard and wiry, free of softness or silkiness, not too long, perfectly straight and flat, no shagginess, and free of waviness, lock, or curl; the hair on head and legs is shorter than on body, but must be hard and wiry.

“Colour. Must be ‘whole coloured,’ the most preferable being bright red, next yellow, grey, or wheaten; white very objectionable on either chest or feet, in fact much white is a disqualifying point.

“Size and symmetry. Weight, in show condition, from 16lb. to 24lb., but in a short time we hope to see the largest reduced to under 22lb., which is a nice, stylish, and useful size; the dog must present a gay, lively, and active appearance, lots of substance, at same time free of clumsiness, as speed and endurance as well as power are very essential.

“Disqualifying points : Nose white, cherry, or spotted to any considerable extent ; mouth much undershot or cankered ; colour brindle or much white ; coat curly or soft.”

First as to ears. Mr. Jamison implies that *cropping* gives a “terrier character” to a dog ; this seems to need no contradiction, as the opinion is no more than one hastily made. Have the Skye, Bedlington, Dandie Dinmont, and Fox terriers no “terrier character?” and yet their ears are not cropped.

The only character cropping gives is that of mongrelism, and association with the lowest in taste and most uneducated of the fancy ; good reasons can be shown for “rounding,” although they may not be uncontrovertible, but who ever heard a reason satisfactory to a sane and humane mind in favour of cropping ? That in dealing with their dogs, gentlemen of education and refined taste in most matters should permit themselves to be ruled by the practices of the ignorant and vulgar, is to me a mystery. It is to be expected that the ignorant and thoughtless should be unaware or overlook in indulging a caprice, or what they wrongly call taste, that they are exposing to constant danger of inflammation, canker, and other evils, one of the most delicate organisms ; but the higher class of fanciers have no excuse for the evil they do in following a fashion which destroys nature’s necessary provision against danger and accident to a sensitive organ. I hope the Irish Terrier Club will put their veto on the abominable practice.

The other point I wish to comment on is the ribs. Mr. Jamison says : “ribs well sprung and well ribbed back.”

It has always been held that this terrier should possess speed, that he should be of “a racing build.” Spuds was admitted to be the correct type to breed to by those who signed Mr. Ridgway’s code, and she is not only a fast bitch but looks it, and is certainly not “well ribbed back,” if by that is meant that the back ribs are well let down, which is what I understand by the expression.

To be well ribbed back is to give strength at the sacrifice of speed, to create not a fast but a cobby dog. The Dandie Dinmont and the pug should be well ribbed back, but they are not built for speed, and any dog to be fast must be more or less up in the flank after the manner of a greyhound, not with deep back ribs like a mastiff.

The front ribs should be rather deep than round and well sprung,

implies roundness and that carries with it a *wide* chest. That formation makes a dog slow, and if we have the *deep* chest *with* the round ribs, we have this intensified. In my opinion the ribs should come well out from their insertion, and show a very slight curve in their descent, the dog appearing by comparison with a Dandie Dinmont to be flat sided, whereas well sprung ribs would give a barrel shape, and this is inconsistent with other points; the head, for instance, which in this breed is long, and all fast dogs are long in the head and deep but not wide in the chest and more or less cut up in the flank, and the latter point is inconsistent with deep back ribs.

The subject of our illustration is Spuds, a celebrated bitch that has won many prizes and served as a model for breeders, although now equalled, if not outstripped, by younger ones.

The descriptive points, drawn up by Mr. R. G. Ridgway and endorsed by signatures of twenty-four other breeders, are as follow :

Head. Long and rather narrow across skull; flat, and perfectly free from stop or wrinkle.

Muzzle. Long and rather pointed, but strong in make, with good black nose, and free from loose flesh and chop.

Teeth. Perfectly level, and evenly set in good strong jaws.

Ears. When uncut, small and filbert shaped, and lying close to head, colour of which is sometimes darker than rest of body, hair on ears short and free from fringe.

Neck. Tolerably long and well arched.

Legs. Moderately long, well set from shoulders, with plenty of bone and muscle, must be perfectly straight, and covered, like the ears and head, with a similar texture of coat as the body, but not quite so long.

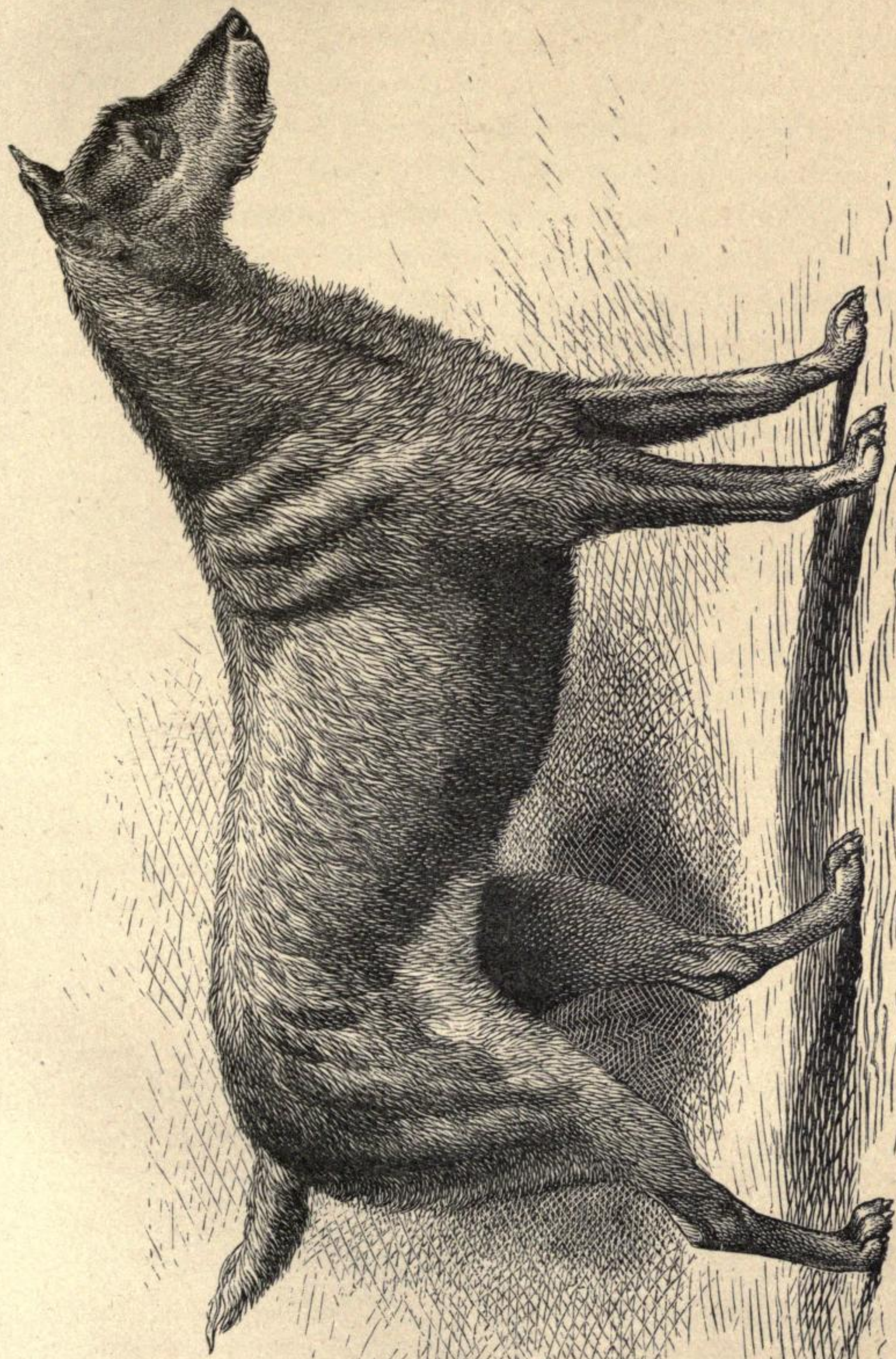
Eyes. Small, keen, and hazel colour.

Feet. Strong, tolerably round, with toes well split up; most pure specimens have black toe nails.

Chest. Muscular, and rather deep, but should not be either full or wide.

Body. Moderately long, with ribs well sprung; loin and back should show great strength, and all well knit together.

Coat. Must be hard, rough, and wiry, in decided contradistinction to softness, shaggyness, silkyness, and all parts perfectly free from rock or curl. Hair on head and legs not quite so long as rest of body.



MR. J. J. PIM'S IRISH TERRIER "SPUDS" (K.C.S.B. 6846).

Sire Jack—Dam Mr. Ahem's Virgil.

Colour most desired is red, and the brighter the colour the better, next in order, wheaten or yellow, and grey, but brindle is to be objected to, thereby showing intermixture of the bull breed.

Tail. If uncut, carried gaily without a ring, and showing absence of feather and bushiness.

Weight of good working Irish terrier varies from 17lb. to 25lb.; in olden times I understand that they ran up to 30lb. and 35lb., but it is better to fix the standard weight as mentioned, viz., 17lb. to 25lb.

Measurements, &c., of celebrated Irish terriers :

Mr. J. J. Pim's champion *Spuds* : Age, $2\frac{1}{4}$ years ; weight, 27lb. ; height at shoulder, 17in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, $31\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; tail cut ; girth of chest, 22in. ; girth of loin, 18in. ; girth of head, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of leg 1in. below elbow, 5in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, 9in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of neck, 12in. ; colour and markings, red.

Mr. G. R. Krehl's bitch *Blarney* : Weight, 14lb. ; height at shoulder, $12\frac{5}{8}$ in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, $25\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tail docked ; girth of chest, 19in. ; girth of loin, 15in. ; girth of head, 12in. ; girth of arm, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of forearm, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. ; cropped.

Mr. R. B. Carey's bitch *Colleen Dhas* : Weight, 21lb. ; height at shoulder, 15in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, $27\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of tail, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of chest, $18\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of loin, 15in. ; girth of head, 12in. ; girth of arm, 6in. ; girth of forearm, $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; cropped.

Mr. E. F. Despard's *Jaque* : Age, 1 year 4 months ; weight, $16\frac{1}{2}$ lb. ; height at shoulder, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, 23in. ; length of tail, 4in. ; girth of chest, $18\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of loin, 15in. ; girth of head, 11in. ; girth of arm, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of forearm, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, 6in. ; colour, bright red, not a white hair ; toenails, black.

Mr. E. F. Despard's *Kitty* : Age, 1 year 4 months ; weight, 23lb. ; height at shoulder, 15in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, 29in. ; length of tail, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of chest, $21\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of loin, $17\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth

of head, $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of arm, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of forearm, 5in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $6\frac{7}{8}$ in. ; colour, red, not a white hair ; toenails, black.

Mr. R. B. Carey's dog *Nabocklish* : Weight, 20lb. ; height at shoulder, $14\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, $27\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of tail, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of chest, 19in. ; girth of loin, 15in. ; girth of head, $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of arm, $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; girth of forearm, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; cropped.

Messrs. R. B. and T. S. Carey's dog *Shamrock* (late *Gaelic*) : Age, $2\frac{1}{2}$ years ; weight, 23lb. ; height at shoulder, 16in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, 26in. ; length of tail, 6in., docked ; girth of chest, 22in. ; girth of loin, $19\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of head, 13in. ; girth of arm, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; girth of forearm, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; colour and markings, red, black nails ; ears cropped.

Mr. G. Krehl's *Sporter* : Weight, 22lb. ; height at shoulder, 16in. ; length from nose to set on tail, 28in. ; tail docked ; girth of chest, 22in. ; girth of loin, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of head, 13in. ; girth of arm, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of forearm, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, 7in. ; girth of muzzle midway between eyes and tip of nose, 7in. ; not cropped ; all black toenails.

Mr. A. F. W. Krehl's *Paddy II.* : Age, 2 years 3 months ; weight, 25lb. ; height at shoulder, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length from nose to set on of tail, $28\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tail docked ; girth of chest, 24in. ; girth of loin, 17in. ; girth of head, 14in. ; girth of arm 1in. above elbow, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; girth of leg 1in. below elbow, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; length of head from occiput to tip of nose, $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; girth of muzzle, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; colour and markings all bright red ; ears cropped.

