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Cairn Terrier Breed Column

by Frances Porter

Cairn Terriers

I apologize for having omitted, quite unintentionally, Mrs. Platt's Foxey's Pride of Clairmar from the list of dogs having completed their championships in 1939. She was bred by Mrs. W.C. Routley and is by Scottie of Clairmar ex Lockyer's Foxy Girl, Line SD, Family 5. I see by the YEAR BOOK that Weny o'Bayou Haven is by Moccasin Master ex. Ch. Til o'Bayou Haven, Line GR, Family 38. Til is a granddaughter of Bhen Troona. I have no data on Moccasin Master but he evidently traces back to Raider.

Do any of the readers of this column know the address of Mr. Tjersland, who owns Gallant Andy McGumpus, or know anything about this dog? I should be so glad to be able to write something about him but so far have been unable to get any clues to him at all. Perhaps Mr. Tjersland will see this query and will write me himself.

The two following articles were taken out of the English periodicals, *Our Dogs* and *Dog World*, respectively, during the past year. With spring breeding plans ahead they seem rather timely to run just now. The piece from *Our Dogs* follows:

"On the invitation of Lady Wheeler, the late Theodore Marples judged in Dublin, in August 1927. At the conclusion of the judging he delivered a short lecture on the cairn terrier: In the course of his remarks, he said: 'In the development of dogs of high degree, specialism has played a great part in their growth and perfection to which nearly all breeds have reached. Standards of points of the various breeds have been evolved, which by consensus of expert opinion are based on points which should fit the dog to perform to the best advantage his particular avocation in the field. Now in the case of the Cairn Terrier, his vocation is to dislodge the otter, badger, fox or wild-cat from the cairns of Scotland.

" 'Now, a toyish or fragile sort of terrier would obviously be useless for such a grim purpose. He should be a dog from 14 to 15 lbs., but a multum in parvo—a sturdy little fellow, big in his quarters, medium length of body, stout legs and powerful jaw. His muzzle should be short and strong, ears small, and eyes small and dark, showing keenness of expression, and a short tail"

"There is no doubt but that the late Mr. Marples was one of the greatest authorities we ever had on all varieties of dogs. He grew old in the service of the dog fancy and he studied all the later varieties as they made their appearance. He saw the folly of the production of the miniature, small-boned cairn, which enjoyed a certain vogue for a time. The pendulum, has now swung back and the breeders are concentrating on the production of cairns such as Mr. Marples advocated a dozen years ago. There is a marked improvement and a greater uniformity amongst the present-day winning cairns as far as size, quarters and bone are concerned. The dainty, cheeky little cairn has given way to the more useful solid-looking terrier."

From *Dog World* shortly after, we get this:

“Those who, in the early show days of cairn terriers, compiled the standard by which they hoped he was to be judged, may not have cared much about the phrasing of their words; they may perhaps seem almost a little complicated, but they were drawn from living specimens of the breed by those who best had known it, and no one of average intelligence can say that the definition of bone, and head is not plainly enough stated. In short, proportion, symmetry, balance, is what the new breeder must aim at. All extremes should be eschewed. Breed for symmetry and balance and if he has the right stock to get expression the newcomer to our ranks will not go far wrong. Each and every breed has its own particular expression, the result of man’s wonderful work in procuring, altering and stabilizing, but that expression is just what no one can describe on paper.

With the cairn this expression is not the result of man’s work. How it came, whence and when, we cannot tell. No man in the recollection of the oldest man alive ever heard of any man, who by selective breeding, manufactured the cairn. Man found him, ready-made to hand, and so strongly made and well established that interference could only influence one or two generations and then evaporated under the strength of the original.

“You who cry out for your ‘big bone’ can get it, and with it your big head and your heavy-jaw, and a lower leg. You can get your ‘pin wire’ coat. All this you can get, but you will not have a cairn. Then the craze for all these things will pass and the new breeders will find themselves with stock with which they cannot win and they will either have to seek a new foundation or spend time

in gradually letting the old cairn come through.

“One of our foremost breeders said ‘I don’t like beg heads. I have always tried to keep the head of the standard.’ And this lady has certainly done so. I cannot recall her ever showing a cairn with a big head. The novice must not confound this with profuse feathering. The more a cairn is feathered the larger will his head look, naturally, but that feather plastered down, or even just smoothed back in the show ring by the judge, will reveal what is the true proportions of the cairn, a head small but in proportion.”

By this time everyone will be getting ready for the avalanche of spring shows, and particularly for Morris and Essex. It is an interesting opportunity to be able to show under Mrs. Routley and I am sure we are all keen to see, or hear, the results. I am afraid I am among the latter group as it will be impossible for me to go down this year, but I shall hope to have a write-up from either an exhibitor or an onlooker for this column in July.

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