

*“The Dog Breeds”*

*Origin - History*

by Ad. Reul

1891-1894

*e) Belgian Shepherd Dogs*

After having quickly glanced at Shepherd dogs of breeds foreign to our country, let us see ours.

There was a time when Belgium owned, in comparison to its generally fairly small geographical area<sup>1</sup>, a considerable number of dogs used to guard ovine herds - even herds of geese - since it then raised, exploited for their wool, or fattened sheep, especially in the regions of Condroz, la Famenne, l'Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse, regions occupying, with the country of Herve, the calcareous zone of our soil; in the sandy zone of la Campine and Flandres, as well as in the schistous and poor zone of l'Ardenne. In the latter, they produced ardenais "leg-O-Lamb" which were part of a very widely profitable trade and which are enjoying a highly justifiable reputation.

Today, it is not quite the same: following the low prices that the regional wool, as well as mutton fell to, inevitable consequence of the crushing and ruinous competition that the Argentine Republic and Australia especially does to our indigenous producers; also following the unheard of expansion given to the production and use of cotton; following the progress still made by science in the world of agriculture, which brought the elimination of the out-of-date system of the fallow, and has caused the reduction in the number and the importance of the herds.

<sup>1</sup>. Over a surface area of 2,945,516 hectares, the area occupied by the Belgian agricultural domain is made up of 2,215,533 hectares subdivided as follows: 935,543 hectares for cereals and farinaceous foods; 33,093 hectares of leguminous plants; 96,774 hectares of industrial plants: hemp, flax, etc., including the sugar beet; 199,357 hectares of potatoes; 736,212 hectares of meadows and fodder and 378,457 hectares of nurseries, orchards, the fallow, heather, etc. Moreover, there are 489,423 hectares of woods and forests. (According to an official document, from 1890).

With proof: at the time of the first general census of 1836, there were 969,630 sheep on the Belgian territory; in 1856, only 583,485 are counted and 586,097 in 1866. Finally, the last official census, the one of 1880, shows the presence of only 365,400 sheep, and we have the inward conviction that such an operation, if practiced at the present time, would not make it possible to discover more than 250,000 heads of woolly animals living on the Belgian territory.

In 1880, the numerical importance of the herds was distributed as follows, by province: :

<i>Luxembourg</i>	:	74,730 sheep.
<i>Hainaut</i>	.	: 63,201 "
<i>Namur</i>	.	: 48,264 "
<i>Fl. orient.</i>	.	: 37,452 "
<i>Liège</i>	.	: 34,250 "
<i>Limbourg</i>	.	: 33,851 "
<i>Anvers</i>	.	: 26,269 "
<i>Brabant</i>	.	: 24,439 "
<i>Ft. oecid.</i>	.	: 22,944 "

It would seem that if the ovine population of the country, in 1880, lost 2/3 of what it was in 1836, the shepherd dogs employed to guard these herds should have been struck in the same proportion. We will establish later how chimerical such fears are in that respect.

Let us see first what is the number of shepherd dogs in active service that Belgium has. We can roughly determine it while proceeding by induction.

Can't one reasonably admit, indeed, that in a country parceled out<sup>2</sup> like ours, and where the ewes frequently even graze on the edges of cultivated parcels, the monitoring of the herds can be effective only at a rate of one dog for fifty sheep? This base being adopted, one would thus have needed

<sup>2</sup> For 6,472,815 of cadastral parcels, the number of the farms was, in 1890, of 910,396. Among these farms 472,471 have a spread of one half-hectare and even less

19,393 shepherd dogs to guard the 969,630 sheep which Belgium owned in 1836. And, in consequence of the decrease officially noted in 1880, this number could be reduced to 7,308, a reduction of 12,085 subjects.

The 7,308 dogs necessary to guard the Belgian herds in 1880 must be divided as follows, by province, in regards to the pre-announced numerical importance of the batch of sheep allotted to each one of them:

<i>Luxembourg</i>	:	1495	sheep dogs.
<i>Hainaut.</i>	:	1264	"
<i>Namur</i>	:	965	"
<i>Eastern Fl.</i>	:	749	"
<i>Liège</i>	:	685	"
<i>Limbourg.</i>	:	677	"
<i>Anvers</i>	:	525	"
<i>Brabant</i>	:	489	"
<i>Western Fl.</i>	:	459	"

Total 7.308

In these statistics, they are, of course, only the shepherd dogs really employed to guard the herds, in other words, the true auxiliaries of the shepherd.

In consequence of the new economic situation, which little by little followed the one of 1836, 12.085 four legged shepherds, very well suited and undoubtedly extremely intelligent like all their kin, found themselves jobless because of the loss of employment.

(2) cont.	121,905	have 1/2 to 1 hectare
	110,187	" 1 to 2 hectares
	56,140	" 2 to 3 "
	32,323	" 3 to 4 "
	21,408	" 4 to 5 "
	8,390	" 5 to 10 "
	5,983	" 10 to 20 "
	7,749	" 20 to 30 "
	5,023	" 30 to 40 "
	1,414	" 40 to 50 "
	3,103	" 50 hectares and above.

What then became of these thousands of "jobless"; did they succumb to hunger and misery? Did one see successive hecatombs of shepherd dogs occurring? By no means. On the contrary, the births well filled the vacuums left in the rows by death and far beyond, and one can say that in spite of the relentless progress of the decrease, the shepherd dogs one encounters now are in far greater number than they ever were in Belgium. It is that, thanks to the qualities he possesses, the old fashioned guard of our herds quickly found a niche elsewhere; here, it got busy as a watchdog or "yard guard dog"; there, he became the "cow dog", or Bouvier; others wore the harness and became draft dogs; finally others, happier, quickly climbed several steps of the social ladder. From rustic countrymen that they were, passed on from father to son as far as the memory can go, they then became city dwellers.

In the cities, as well as in castles, it did not take them a long time to win all the sympathies from their new lords and Masters, with such a banner that towards the end of 1894, a great number of amateurs, as their impassioned admirers, met in Brussels in order to seek the means of better knowing and appreciating the brilliant physical and mental qualities of our indigenous shepherd dog.

It is on this occasion that the Club du Chien de Berger Belge was born, which took on the task of thoroughly studying the breed, of revitalizing it in case of need, and of watching over all that has to do with its betterment by the method of inbreeding, that is through a thorough and constant selection.

Such is the origin, such is the goal of the Club du Chien de Berger Belge which was recognized, encouraged and sponsored since its first steps, by the Société Royale Saint-Hubert.

The new Club did not waste its time. It understood that the first of its duties, was to devote itself to a meticulous investigation into the state of purity of the breeds of shepherd dogs in the nine provinces. To this end, the dogs of the conglomeration of Brussels were brought together at the Veterinary School of Cureghem, in the large consultation room graciously provided at our disposal by the director, Professor Degive, with the

authorization of the Minister of Agriculture, on November 15, 1891. 117 came. In addition, a great number of provincial dogs were examined in residence by some delegates of the Club. The majority of these beautiful dogs of old Belgian stock had been indicated by the veterinarians established in the country, to whom I had been authorized to send a circular in which I called upon their knowledge, their patriotism, and their devotion to the public interests. I note here, with the honor of their profession, that these pleasant fellow-members knew how to render themselves useful for the new Club, by providing me in the most charming and unselfish way, with all the information that I asked of them.

Upon receiving these documents, I had a duty to personally acknowledge to each one my gratitude by some words of thanks, but that is not enough and I seize with happiness the occasion which is willingly offered to me today, to thank them all publicly. Their conduct is worthy of the greatest praises and such actions are all in honor of the veterinary profession, which they raise and increase in the eyes of the public. They were highly appreciated within the Club du Chien de Berger Belge, believe it, dear fellow members. Once again, thank you with all my heart.

I want it to remain well known that at the time one calls upon the Belgian veterinary surgeons concerning a question of general interest, one can always count on their self-denial and their devotion.

It is thus only after having seen, attentively studied, and compared hundreds of dogs, after having been able to recognize and to prune out all the subjects of a doubtful purity or obviously foreign source<sup>3</sup> that the Club du Chien de Berger Belge adopted the following points as belonging only to

<sup>3</sup> There exists in many places and particularly in Ardenne and Campine, slate gray or fawn dogs, with long hairs in locks caked together with mud, with the tail usually short or cut off which is from the Brie origin. They are excellent and beautiful. Their stay in our districts goes back to an era so far away that their current owners who knew the parents, the grand parents, etc., of these dogs, swear to their mighty gods that these animals are of pure Belgian lines. That they are naturalized in Belgium, We do not dispute it, but they have all the ethnographic characters of the dog of Brie, and they are indeed Briards. In Ardenne, these dogs are known under the name of "berjeots or of old berjeots," our estimable fellow-member Polet, of Beauraing, tells us in writing. We indeed remember to have heard this name used to qualify and distinguish them from the other shepherd dogs known in Belgium.

the breed of our country; and to the three varieties which it includes; varieties of which the differential character the most outstanding lies in the texture; the length therefore the appearance of the hair.

## POINTS OF The CHIEN DE BERGER BELGE.

### *General characters of the Breed.*

The *general appearance indicates* an animal which is intelligent, rustic, accustomed to the life in the open air, built to resist the seasons' bad weather and the so appreciable atmospheric vicissitudes of the Belgian climate.

*To his innate aptitudes* for the guard of the herds, he adds the invaluable qualities of the best guard dog for estates; if need be, he is, without any hesitation, the obstinate and zealous defender of his Master.

The Chien de Berger Belge is vigilant and attentive; constantly moving, he seems untiring. He shows a marked tendency to move in circles rather than in a straight line.

*Broad cranium*, with the forehead rather flattened than round.

The *break of the nose* (transverse depression existing at the boundary between skull and muzzle) is moderate.

*Long head* and pointed muzzle.

The *snout* (end of the nose) is black.

The *eye* is brownish or yellowish; the gaze is questioning and indicates intelligence.

The *ears* are triangular shaped, stiff and erect, well set, semi-long.

Cylindrical *neck*, not too long.

*Top Line* (back, loin, croup) horizontal, broad and powerful, average length.

*Tail* strong at its base, of average length, presenting different peculiarities according to varieties. At rest, the dog holds it low, the point

bends backwards at the level of the hock. In action, it raises it by showing a curve more accentuated towards the tapering end. It does not carry it as a trumpet. - to be noted however that some dogs are born without tail or with a simple stump.

The *breast* is rather narrow than broad.

The *chest* is not very wide, but on the other hand is deep and well let down as in all the animals with fast gaits.

The *belly* of a moderate development (neither tucked up, nor as a Greyhound).

The *shoulder* is long and slanting, forming a very acute angle with the arm.

The *elbow* is exactly directed towards the length of the body.

The *forearm* is long.

The *buttock* and thigh are well muscled .

The *limb* is long.

Round *foot*, as a cat foot.

Normal *stance*.

*Size*: on average 55 centimeters.

The *coat* is very mixed: black, black badly dyed, brown, brown brindle, dirty gray, muddy looking, etc.

The *hair* is always abundant, thick and tight, forming an excellent protective wrapping. The hair being of a length, look and direction extremely diverse in the shepherd dogs of Belgian type, it is necessary to adopt this point as a criterium, in order to distinguish three varieties in the breed and it is advisable to recognize the dogs:

#### A -- *With long hair.*

Distinctive characters: smooth hair, rather long on the entirety of the surface of the body, except on the head, the external side of the ears and the lower parts of the limbs. The opening of the aural conch is protected by bushy hairs.

The *neck* is furnished with long and abundant hairs laid out in a collerette.

The *tail* forms a plume.

The *forearm* is furnished on its rear side, from the elbow to the wrist, with a fringe of long hairs.

The *buttocks* are decorated with long and abundant hair.

*B. --with wire hair.*

Differing from the preceding ones by the hair, which is not smooth, but disheveled, semi-long and more uniformly distributed, presenting moreover, on the muzzle, hairs forming a goatee.

The *skull* is narrower.

The *break of the nose* is less pronounced.

The *ears* are longer, carried more forward, not so wide at their base.

The *tail* does not form a plume.

*C. --with short hair*

Other than the general features of the breed, this variety is recognizable by the hair, which appears to be half long on all the surface of the body, short on the head, contrarily longer around the neck and the tail. Moreover, the rear edge of the buttock is furnished with longer hairs, distributed on line and tilted towards the inner side of the limb.

The *tail* is spiked.

Scale of the points.

1. General aspect or overall conformation (gait, proportions, etc.)	10 points
2. Head (skull, face or muzzle, break of the nose, eye, ears) and neck.	9 points
3. Top line and tail.	9 points
4. Breast, chest and belly.	5 points
5. Limbs (shoulders, elbow, fore arm, buttock, thigh, leg, feet) and stance.	8 points
6. Hair.	9 points

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Total 50 points

We show here the portraits of three dogs each representing one of the varieties of Belgian type.



La race du chien de berger belge. — Ses trois variétés : à poils longs, à poils ras, à poils durs.

We owe the picture of this interesting trio *ad naturam* to the great kindness of the one of our best and better known animalists, M. A. Clarys, who we cannot praise enough.

Mr. Clarys has agreed readily enough to put his skillful pencil at our service, and he was very happy to draw the three subjects that we presented to him for this purpose, namely:

*Duc*, a Belgian Shepherd with long, dark gray brindle hair, 2 1/2 years old, 1st prize in Cureghem, id. in Brussels, id. in Antwerp and prize of honor in Brussels and Antwerp in 1892. Owner: Mr. Arthur Meul, of Saint-Gilles-Bruxelles.

*Charlot*, a Belgian Shepherd with short smooth hair, fawn coloured, charcoaled on the back and the head, white breast, 2 years old, 1st prize in Antwerp, 2nd prize in Cureghem, 2nd prize in Brussels 1892. Owner: Mr. Jean Verbruggen, of Cureghem.

*Dick*, a Belgian Shepherd with gray wire hair. Owner Mr. Aug. Dagnelie, of Brussels.

Someone had pointed out to us that in such or such village had existed or still existed a "breed" or a "kind" of dogs (the words family or variety would be more correct) having the greatest resemblance to the wolf, or looking like the spitting image of Mister fox. They are exceptional peculiarities only; this happens in all the breeds of each species; they can be even fixed by virtue of inbreeding. Still let us add that there is present around Bauffe (Hainaut) a variety of dwarf shepherds, hardly weighing but 7 kilograms, with black hair, resembling large Schipperkes, extremely intelligent and noteworthy guardians.

In the Ardenne, some "cow dogs" or shepherds are invaluable auxiliaries for the hunting of big game, especially for that of wild boar.

The so distinct characteristics which should exist according to the points, between the three varieties with regards to the hair are far from being clearly defined in all the individuals. We can expect to still find for a while what Dalziel formerly noticed in Collies, i.e. to see some subjects with long hair, others with short hair, still others with wire hair, born from the same parents and constituting only one and the same litter. That is easily understood by those who know the little care that the shepherds often take to impregnate a bitch with long hairs by a dog of the same type, etc. A selection and an intelligent purging will quickly put good order in such a state of affairs.

Where the short hair type has well maintained all its uniformity is in La Campine from Antwerp, towards the Dutch border and beyond that, in the Noord-Brabant (Holland). Great was our astonishment to run across last year (September 7, 1892), while visiting an agricultural exhibition organized by Noord-Brabantsche Maatschappij van Landbouw, in Oosterhout, a few miles from Antwerp border, a dozen short haired shepherd dogs of the best Belgian type, belonging to peasants of the surroundings. We own a bad photograph of this group of uniform subjects.

These dogs have the size of the fox or that of the wolf, they have short hair, a fawn brindle coat; their ears are remarkably erect, slender and pointed, opened forward. Other features: triangular and tapered muzzle, jet black snout; spiked tail, well carried almost horizontally though slightly raised towards the tip. The first prize was awarded to a dog of a rare intelligence having enough nose to go discover, under a basket, the handkerchief which his Master had given him to smell and which he had however not seen him hide there.

There could exist in the Dutch East Indies - according to information which I owe to a man worthy of faith, Mr. Van H., a chemist assigned to a sugar cane factory, in that overseas country - there could be there an imported breed absolutely identical in shape, size, gait, etc., to that which we observed together in Oosterhout, with this difference that the uniformity

in the coat would have disappeared, (These dogs, instead of being fawn-colored, would be of all shades. They are used in bands for the attack and the destruction of wild boars, which swarm the sugar cane plantations and cause the greatest devastation there, not so much by eating this industrial plant, but by establishing their dens in the plantations of canes which they crisscross like true hurricanes, breaking or bruising all the stems on their path, almost calling off the harvest.

In such occurrence, specialists are called upon by the sugar manufacturers; they arrive accompanied by about thirty shepherd dogs of Belgian type (and of the Oosterhout type) short haired, attack trained. These dogs spring on the uncovered wild boar, surround it, badger it, tear it up and always end up, considering their number, putting it to death, not without losing one or more of their own. The carcass of the wild boar is cleaned out, cut into four pieces, and slightly subjected at once to the action of an improvised fire of branches, then it is distributed as a quarry to the dogs which are by no means tempted, as it may, to eat this meat raw.

Remarkable thing, almost all these shepherd dogs, hunters of wild boars, operating in Java, appear ferocious towards the Javanese black people; on the contrary they fear white people, and their half-breeds and never attack them. Thus in 1890, a workman, half-breed hollando-Javanese, having been bitten without any reason by one of these dogs, the area doctor found this fact to be so unusual and so extraordinary that the dog was regarded as rabid and put down and buried at once without any kind of trial.

One had never seen a dog of this type attacking a white person nor a half breed. His inexplicable boldness cost the life of the one which it is about. As for the wounded half breed, he was sent to Paris, to Pasteur's laboratory, at the expense of the sugar Company which employed this workman and for whom Mr. Van H., to whom we owe this information, is the chemist. He returned from there in good health, they tell me. One will undoubtedly forgive us this slightly long digression, but it is attached too directly to the history of the shepherd dogs of Belgian type so that we

cannot resist the desire to reproduce accurately what was truly told to us in the pre-recollected circumstances.

Which importance is it necessary to attach to the presence or the absence of a tail in the Belgian shepherd dog?

We have indicated above the reasons that caused the primitive shepherds to practice the amputation of the tail and sometimes that of the ears of their dogs. We said that was especially in order to give less hold to the so formidable tooth of their most ferocious adversaries, the wolves, which formerly abounded and against whom the shepherd-dogs had to frequently fight battle for the protection of the life of the ewes entrusted to their vigilance.

One knows that a dog which is vigorously grabbed and held down by the ears or the tail is an animal half defeated, it is a fighter without protection, which utters such dismal cries and only thinks of asking for mercy. To cut off organs that are so prominent and therefore so easy to grab, was to strengthen the means of protection of the herd's guardian.

And, after long years have passed - without that becoming the rule - one could find from time to time in a litter, one or more pups of which the number of caudal vertebrae had remained below the norm. These are the dogs with short tail, they constitute the exception, because the rule much more often than not has maintained the natural type, with long tail. However, some of these animals with aborted tail have a tendency to reproduce subjects with a tail more or less short and, maybe through careful selection, with the help of inbreeding, could we more or less fix this anomaly. Thus, we saw, on January 29, 1893, at Mr. A. Wendelen's, a lawyer, in Brussels, a litter of eight shepherd dog puppies resulting from a father and mother with short tail (congenital anomaly of the parents), the grandmother herself, which was shown to us, is found with the same inborn physical condition; the grandfather is unknown. In fact, among these eight pups, we counted three with complete caudal appendix and one with semi-long tail; a fourth

possesses only about one third of its tail and the last three had the very short coccyx (one or two vertebrae the most). Let us add that all the pups in that litter are of the same charcoaled brown shade as that of the parents. Only one, of a darker color, shows white on the breast.

It is thus seen by what has just been reported, shepherd dogs can exceptionally be born with a short tail, i.e. not having the 18 to 22 caudal vertebrae that are the rule. Do the subjects thus modified have a greater value than those of the normal type? Such is the question which comes up; it is of high interest to the amateurs. Well, we seek to find an explanation as to why these abnormals should be, as their admirers affirm openly, the pure ones among the pure ones in the breed, why the absence of tail should be the criteria of how ancient the origin is.

We recently saw in the company of two of our pupils a common mutt, an ugly street dog, born without the least beginning of a tail. From the existence of this anomaly, should we thus conclude that this dog is purebred! That would be not very wise, it should well be acknowledged.

We will accept this opinion when one will succeed in making us understand why the three long tailed pups in the litter of baby shepherd-dogs of which we just talked about are of less ancient origin than their short tailed twin brothers laying down side by side in the same cradle and with which they share the mother's milk in this moment!

And here is on what rest certain assertions, right away accepted without any thought, by the common run of amateurs! No, the shepherd dog born with an incompletely developed tail is not of a more patriarchal origin than its brother merrily whisking a semaphore whose skeleton is composed of 18 to 22 small bones.

Here is now our feeling on the significance and the value to be allotted to the absence or the presence of the caudal organ in the shepherd dog: we understand that formerly, one saw oneself in the need for docking the guardian of the herds which was also the appointed protector; but, today, the conditions have changed, the wolves have disappeared and the dog

thus does not have to beat off their attacks; moreover the shepherd dog becomes increasingly a city dweller or rather a dog of luxury and we estimate that a beautiful tail carried well must be regarded as a splendid ornament likely to embellish the animal.

In addition, any dog without tail has less gracious motions; deprived of a rudder, he turns on the spot with more difficulty if not more weariness. For this reason we consider that to amputate the shepherd dog's tail is to perpetrate a barbarian act, inhuman, incomprehensible, and justified in only one and sole circumstance: it is when the tail is badly carried and that one may find it beneficial to erase such a bad point.

We watch out for any exhibited dog, may it be most beautiful of the batch, of which the tail was amputated, because we think that it is not without reason that one took away one of the most demonstrative organs that this worthy animal can use to convey to us his feelings by his antics. For us, a shepherd dog with a cropped tail does not deserve a prize.

As for those which are born tailless, we cannot hold it against them, since nature created them that way, while regretting the imperfection which characterizes them, we cannot withdraw them from the prize list when they bring together serious attributes of conformation in all their other areas.

Such is our personal opinion on the question which has just been posed. We say personal, because we do not want it to be binding in the least for our respectable colleagues of the committee of the Club of the Belgian Shepherd Dog. We, however, believe we can affirm here that the opinion which has been just offered is accepted by the very large majority of the members of the aforementioned committee and we hope that after having read what precedes, all will be won over.

### *Continental Shepherd Dogs.*

In the majority of the show programs, is still entered that heading, which does not have its justification any more; it is out of date and like such, it must fatally fall under the blows which are dealt to it thanks to the

progress made in the study of the breeds of shepherd dogs, a study whose first consequence was the marking out of the characterizing points between the best known of them.

We understand perfectly the embarrassment of the organizers of the first shows, having to face the impossibility of classifying a series of varieties forming the great group of the shepherds-dogs whose ethnic characters had not been established up to that point. That which, at that time, has found like a common ground, the expression “Continental Shepherds” saved the situation temporarily; but, since then, some groups of amateurs came to render this situation clearer and clearer while bringing to the Society Saint-Hubert, the seriously and lengthily studied points characterizing such or such breed.

Nothing more was left to do, consequently, for the committee than to tear the Continental veil which sheltered the formerly unknown, and to give a place in the sun to the breeds of shepherd-dogs whose physiognomy is sufficiently defined? We thus wish highly that henceforth, the show programs carry, under the heading shepherd-dogs, the following subdivisions:

1. Belgian shepherd dogs (three varieties).
2. Shepherd-dogs of Great Britain: Collie, Bobtail.
3. French shepherd-dogs: of Brie, of Beauce.
4. German Shepherd dogs (three varieties).
5. Russian Shepherd dogs.

With time, one will be able to add to this list, the name of the breeds which will be studied later on, because it seems to us that much still remains to be done in this path and that a great number of little known breeds still wait for the day of their description, I was going to say of their birth. They will find their place following those which have just been enumerated.

The reader will share our opinion when he knows that the ovine population of the whole world, entrusted to the guard of the invaluable servants to which we devote this work, comprises approximately 500 million sheep thus distributed: Republic-Argentina: 75.000.000 of wool animals, Australia: 62.200.000, - European Russia 42.000.000, the United States:

33.935.000, - Great Britain: 32.220.000, - Germany: 24.935.000, - France: 24.589.000, - Asian Russia : 23.000.000, - Spain: 22.054.000, - Austria Hungary: 20.103.000, - Uruguay: 16.000.000, - Cape of Good Hope, id. - European Turkey :15.000,000, - Asian Turkey : 15.000.000, - Algeria: 10.000.000, - Morocco: 10.000.000, - Persia : 10.000.000, - Italy: 7.000,000, - Romania: 5.000.000, - Egypt and Barbarie: 5.000.000, - Canada: 3.300.000, - Sweden and Norway: 3.252.000, - Portugal: 2.700.000, - Greece: 2.700.000, - Denmark: 1.719.000, - Holland: 936.000, - Belgium: 365.400 sheep (in 1880).

Millions of shepherd dogs are necessary to guard these five hundred million sheep. However, and consequently, the herds being disseminated under all latitudes and under most diversified telluric and atmospheric conditions, it is obvious that the dogs appointed to their monitoring offer between them many variables depending in which regions they live. Many breeds of shepherd dogs are inevitably unknown to us.

#### Training of the shepherd dogs.

Just as "*a good hunting dog has an innate hunting drive*", a good shepherd dog instinctively guards the herd of sheep which is entrusted to him. But, it may be that he puts too much eagerness into it, that he inflicts punishments with little in keeping with the fault committed, or does not obey, or does not obey fast enough, either to the voice or to the gesture of its Master. Without training, it also sometimes acquires bad habits, such as to bark irrelevantly and at every turn, to lacerate the ears of the ewes, to deeply bite them on the shoulders, the nose, etc. Such are the reasons for which it is appropriate that any shepherd dog goes to the school to make its education and to complete its training there. The best schoolmaster is, that goes without saying, a shepherd dog having proven himself "One could never give too much care", Magne writes, "to train the shepherd dogs, to get used to being the sentinel, to hold the herd suitably en mass and especially not to frighten the sheep, and not to bite them:

« To train them, it is necessary to start when young and be very perseverant, give caresses, treats and punishment when needed. It is necessary especially to give them the example of a well trained dog

« The first times that one entrusts them to a sheep, it is necessary to be at their side and to supervise them attentively; if they seem to want to bite, they are grabbed and they are corrected; one must let hang a string around the neck in order to be able to stop them more promptly.

« By means of this rope, one can even correct them, make them feel that they did wrong.

« If there are invaluable dogs because of their doings and their intelligence, but which have unfortunately the fault of being a little too mean and of biting the wooly beasts, they should be muzzled or even better the canine teeth should be broken and even the incisors if need be.”

The Americans have a special manner to train their shepherd dogs. The famous Charles Darwin who, at hardly 25 years old, was part of a scientific dispatch of circumnavigation around the globe, aboard the *Beagle*, will set forth of what it consists: "During my stay at an estancia (thus one names a farm, in America), in Montevideo, says this great observer, I felt pleasantly surprised while listening to the narration and while following closely the ways of education adopted for the shepherd dogs of the country. It is extremely ordinary over there to run across immense herds of sheep, which, at a distance of ten kilometers from any dwelling, are not even accompanied by a human shepherd, and whose guard is entrusted to one or two dogs. I was often astonished by the mutual bond between the dogs and the sheep; but one can say literally that this bond originates at the udder.

« The system of education consists in the early separation of the young dog from his/her mother, and to accustom him to the herd of which he will be the intended guard. Three or four times per day, one makes the young animal nurse a ewe, then one lays him down on a wool bed. Never one allows

him to communicate with a strange dog or with the other members of his family. Moreover one makes him undergo castration, so that, arrived at adulthood, he has hardly any awareness of the existence of his species. It results from this education that the animal does not indicate the least desire to abandon the herd, and, just as a dog defends his Master, he takes the defense of the threatened sheep. When one approaches a herd, the dog comes forward while barking, and, this signals all the sheep to gather and take shelter behind him. These dogs can also extremely well bring back, in the evening, at a certain time, the herd to the sheep house.

« Their greatest shortcoming, while they are young, is to want to play with the sheep, and not to leave any rest to that one of their poor underlings which becomes the object of their pastime.

« Each day, the shepherd dog goes to the dwelling of his Master in order to obtain his meat ration there, and as soon as it is given to him, he slips away, his tail between his legs, as if he had just done something shameful. The other dogs of the house act towards to the stranger who comes to take his share of the cake in the most tyrannical way; the lesser mutt chases him and tries to bite him.

« But, at the moment it rejoined his herd, he stops, wheels around, starts to bark, and its pursuers scamper off at once. Wild dogs seldom venture, and only when they are exacerbated by hunger, to attack the sheep kept by such faithful shepherd dogs. »

“A good and well trained dog, as many are found in the countries with large herds, is more useful”, says Magne, “than a human helper”: he comes, he goes, circles around the herd, of which pace he accelerates or slows down at the slightest sign, at the sound of a voice, at a movement of the hand; he saves harvests, moves the animals in arrears, keeps the herd together, prevents the animals from leaving the paths and the pastures, will seek the runaway sheep, brings back the wandering ones, etc. The badly

trained dogs are always harmful; they bite the animals, squeeze them and thus cause accidents and abortions. A bad dog harms directly while squeezing, biting the animals, and indirectly, by frightening the animals, while coming and going through the herd suddenly, and without purpose.

« According to the manner in which they achieve their task”, says Felix Villeroy<sup>4</sup>, “one differentiates the shepherd dogs between the runners and the pointers”.

« The Runner is a passionate dog which, going back and forth on his footsteps, runs continuously on alongside the herd. If the herd grazes on an empty field, close to another field which is prohibited, the runner does not stop scouring the line which the animals cannot cross. And however he inspires little fear to the animals, which often, immediately after he has passed, go graze into the forbidden fruit. These runners bring upon themselves an extraordinary tiredness to which they do not resist for a long time, and they do not count among the good shepherd dogs

« The Pointer, on the contrary, is lying at the feet of the shepherd or in the furrow of the field which the animals cannot cross. The eyes half shut, he appears to be dozing. But, as soon as that the shepherd says his name and makes a hand motion, or that it sees an animal crossing the boundary of the field forsaken to pasture, then he springs like an arrow and the delinquents are promptly back to order. These dogs bring respects without unnecessarily tormenting the animals; they are much less tired, they last longer and they are certainly the best. Their intelligence is really admirable, and often I am astonished while seeing as they understand a word, a sign of the hand, or only of the head, or a whistle blow of the shepherd.

« When the shepherd is seen, calm and motionless, leaning on his crook, Villeroy adds, and close to him his dog with his head high,

<sup>4</sup> Handbook of the stockbroker of animals with wool.

the eye lit up, stiff eared, awaiting a sign or a word, ready to spring to obey the order of his Master; then one admires this empire of man, who started by making his slave of the most intelligent animal, to arrive with his assistance at subduing or to subjugate -other animals. »

In the countries of advanced culture, where the wolves have ceased living, the guard of the herds is advantageously entrusted to dogs of small size, with long tail and ears, lively and eager to work; they are the best; they are only used to help the shepherd in the control and the monitoring of the herd. But where the wolves still abound, - in Russia for example - dogs of larger size, strong and courageous, with ears and tail cropped in order to lessen the enemy's potential gripping areas, are essential. These dogs are often crossbred with the mastiff or mountain dogs. He has already been mentioned in this work.

« So that the dogs are good against the wolf”, wrote Magne, “it is necessary that being young, they are trained by individuals of their species. When they've pursued a wolf two or three times, that they have been encouraged by the shepherd, they then show much eagerness to fulfill their mission; should they arrive in a wooded area, they cover all the windings; should they hear the wolf calling cry, they go at once towards where from the voice comes from. »

The bitches are generally better than the males; the latter are sometimes lenient towards the she-wolves.

The dogs must be armed with collars made of metal, or of very thick leather spiked with iron nails, because the wolf seeks to grab them by the neck to strangle them.

### *Qualities and moral deficiencies of certain shepherd dogs.*

We have been satisfied by the invaluable signs of intelligence shown by the majority of the shepherd dogs. In some, however, certain deficiencies can exist and in particular that to bite the ewes or to bark unceasingly.

Any dog whose tooth penetrates readily under the skin of sheep must be taken away from the herd; he creates more harm than good. Especially is to be feared the one who grabs the sheep by the throat or in the muscular areas of the fore limb and in particular the forearm.

If the dog finds himself obligated to bite to be obeyed, it is above the hock of the animal that his fangs must be felt.

To prevent the dogs from biting, or to get rid of this bad habit, one can muzzle them or use some kind of snaffle made with an iron cylinder introduced into the mouth as a bit and held by straps forming "montants" and halter to be joined at the collar. This bit necessarily prevents the dog from tightening his jaws when he wants to bite.

One sees good dogs attacking the sheep by the ears, the nose, the legs, but without hardly doing them any harm.

A great fault is to bite the wool and to tear it off by tufts by letting themselves hang from the fleece. It is a direct loss for the owner.

Any dog too active, which drives the ewes too harshly, creates consecutive scuffles and abortions. It becomes hardly possible to lead to good end, in normal time, the fattening of sheep entrusted to similar guardians.

To bark was regarded as a serious fault by the jury of *Scheep-Dog-Trial* of Cureghem. For each vocal outburst, the competitor lost from 5 to 10 points out of 100. The opinions are, however, divided as to the disadvantages which the action of barking can present in the special case which occupies us. The *Stock-Keeper* even alleges that much sought after. It is an essential point for them to have a loud voice, because when an important herd, of 1000 to 1500 sheep is dispersed, on a sign of the shepherd, the dog has to only let his voice be heard three or four times, so that all the sheep gather, and saves the animal the trouble of going to seek them.

In other places the dogs are invited to keep silent. It is, for example,

when the herd is plundering a crop field, with the consent of the shepherd. Thus, the shepherds who, from Germany in the past, used to drive fattened sheep to Paris, sought the silent dogs. These shepherds did not certainly make a trip of 400 â 600 kilometers without often letting the herds browse in fields they were not allowed to enter, and they did not want their passing to be betrayed by the barking of the dogs. "The dog must sometimes bark", says Villeroy, "but he must do it at the command of his Master". There are dogs which bark continuously; the animals are accustomed to these barks and do not pay the least attention to them any more. As for the barkers themselves, they get tired unnecessarily.

### *The Scheep- Dogs-Trials.*

The name is English, the kind of sport which is used to describe being of Scottish origin. Literally, it means trials for shepherd dogs, in other words contests between shepherd dogs leading or guarding sheep. After having taken part in these trials, the dogs are thus classified either according to the amount of their physical beauty, but well according to their degree of service ability; it is more practical, it is better.

The *Scheep-Dog-Trial* of the shepherd dogs corresponds absolutely to the Field-Trial imposed on the pointers. On both sides, it is a question of assessing the quality and nothing but quality. And ugliest are sometimes the best.

It is thus in the mountains of Scotland, the Highlands that Scheep-dogs-trials took birth; here is how: "Many years ago," writes Mr. Samson in *The Live Stock Gazette*, "the Countess of Bective proposed the idea to build a society for still improving the already so remarkable aptitudes of the Collie. The only one who knows the wild landscapes of the mountains in the counties of the north of Scotland, who is capable of appreciating the usefulness of these faithful auxiliaries to the owners of herds. The indigenous breeds of sheep:

Black-Faced, Cheviot. Hordwicks and their crossbreeds, live in freedom on these immense, uncultivated, and unfenced regions; also without the help of the intelligent Collie, it would be a complete impossibility for the farmers to gather their herds scattered in the mountain. The Collie is essentially needed. And when the time of shearing has arrived, in fact the dogs are entrusted to go look in the steep pastures, for the sheep which are going to be stripped of their fleece. An old practice dictates that the farmers help each other mutually bring this task to conclusion: a certain day is predetermined a long time in advance, to accomplish the shearing of the sheep of each farm. And that day, all the farmers established within a several miles radius arrive with their men; all start to shear, each one competing with skill and swiftness.

These meetings, calling it those of the olden days, maintain the good relations between neighbors and people of the same status, and they are the occasion of some festivities which are, it seems to us, counterpart of the horse shoeing sessions in the Camargue. The manager of the station where the shearing is happening is in charge of food and refreshments for this day's helpers, the work of that day generally ends with "a dance party between the young people and card game party between the old men".

The legend does not say if the Collie, which showed such great intelligence and skill all the day, receives, himself also, its share of the cake. Undoubtedly, because the idea of the Countess of Bective struck many members among the main owners of the counties of North, and it has been already several years that *Northern Counties Association* organizes trials, alternatively in *Cumberland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Westmoreland*, etc. The promoter of the first trials for shepherd dogs is Mr. J Mohnen, of Slates. The rewards given to the winners of these trials consist of substantial prizes bolstered by silver trophies.

Thus the Collies learned how to publicly demonstrate their brilliant possibilities and they have been held in such higher esteem by the inhabitants of these regions; thus their reputation spread to the whole world. Here now of what the Scottish Scheeps-dog- trials consists of:

Each competitor must go to fetch from the mountain, or rather from the slope of a hill, sloped toward the side of the spectators, the three ewes that were released there for his benefit and out of his sight; it must push them in front of him to approximately 800 meters from there, in 10 to 15 minutes, by making them pass over banks, through quickset hedges or through barriers in which were cut narrow openings, between hurdles placed in parallel, etc., finally having them enter a corral set close to the spectators... and undoubtedly bettors, since, in the United Kingdom, who mentions Sport also means “bet”. The creation of the racehorse himself, in the XVIIth century, isn't it not the direct consequence of the need to bet which stirs up the mind of very good Englishman?

The duration of each test is limited, but in addition to the time limit, the judges must especially consider the way in which the dog behaved during all the duration of the work which was imposed upon him. Here is, according to *The Stock-Keeper*, how the judge of these trials usually distributes the total of 100 points:

- « 40 - To move directly towards the goal and to find the sheep; to remain at a certain distance of the herd; to obey the whistle and do good work on the mountain; to trace good circles, etc.; where the dog is not under the monitoring of its Master.
- « 10 - To have the sheep pass over the banks, the walls and through the gates of the fenced area fence.
- « 10 - Over the first obstacles and between the posts.
- « 10 - Between the hurdles placed in parallel.
- « 10 - Between the second posts and the flags.
- « 10 - have the sheep enter the corral.
- « 10 - time spent to carry out the job.

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100

One can modify the tests, but always they remain interesting because they give rise to a host of incidents which put the public in good spirits.

They are inoffensive, because no animal suffers from it; they are useful to the utmost to get excellent shepherd dogs.

We have just read that a trainer prepares himself to take along to Chicago ten shepherds and their dogs to organize Sheep-dog-trials there, which will take place during the first month of the World Fair.

It is to the *Collie-Club of Brussels* and the *Club of the Belgian Shepherd Dog* that is owed the honor of having imported this kind of sport to the continent.

The first trials of shepherd dogs at work took place in the vast meadows of the Société for the markets and slaughterhouses of Curèghem, on the 1st and 2nd of May, 1892; they were a perfect success and interested the spectators keenly; twenty-two competitors, almost all of a Belgian breed, were presented at the starting gate. Since the tests were run on a plain, a meandering course strewn with obstacles had been designed through the meadow. Here is an excerpt of the requirements of the program:

Each dog will have to lead 10 sheep which he will handle as they exit the enclosure, and will come to park them close to the public while having them follow the course of a track in an "S", 200 meters long, of a width varying between 6 and 8 meters, included between two furrows traced with the plough in the grass. The shepherd will have to walk in front of the small herd; he will not be able to intervene other than to give orders to his dog.

The sheep must pass between the posts and the flags, cross a narrow wooden bridge, climb a slope, cross a brooklet, etc., before being ushered through a small door into the enclosure which will be used as the end of the line. The maximum time granted to each dog, to achieve all the course with its small band of sheep, is ten minutes; if it exceeds this period of time, he is thrown out of the trial. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Experience has taught us that this time is much too long for the majority of the good dogs. Some of our competitors indeed ran the course in 3 minutes, indeed even in 2 1/2 minutes.

The maximum of the points to be granted by the jury is 100.

Each time that the dog lets a sheep leave the track, he will lose 1 point; for two sheep or more, he will lose 2 points each time.

Any dog which would bite a sheep on the forelimb or the ear would lose 5 points; that which would grab a sheep by the throat would see 10 points removed.

Any dog which would bark throughout its work would lose from 5 to 10 points, according to the persistence in which he would give voice.

For all the remainder (irregularities in the walk, eccentric circles, etc.), the jury will rate it as it sees it.

The dogs, "which bites too much" will be immediately thrown out of the trial. The majority of the competitors showed great intelligence and quite a great aptitude for the drive of the herds at the time of *Scheep-dog-trial* in Cureghem. And yet, the shepherds had not been able to conduct the least bit of rehearsal before the trial, considering that many were unaware of the arrangements of the course and the nature of the work that was going to be imposed on them.

One should, as much as possible, popularize this kind of sport not offering any danger, interesting and useful all at the same time, and we would like to see it scheduled with the program of any agricultural ceremony of some importance.

In 1893, *the Scheep-dog-trials* of Belgium will take place in Spa, according to all expectations, at the time of the dog show of the Société Royale Saint-Hubert, on the 7 or 8th of August.