

The Brussels Griffon

Contributed by Admin
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THE BRUSSELS GRIFFON

Away back in the 'seventies numbers of miners in Yorkshire and the Midlands are said to have possessed little wiry-coated and wiry-dispositioned red dogs, which accompanied their owners to work, being stowed away in pockets of overcoats until the dinner hour, when they were brought out to share their masters' meals, perchance chasing a casual rat in between times. Old men of to-day who remember these little "red tarriers" tell us that they were the originals of the present-day Brussels Griffons, and to the sporting propensities of the aforesaid miners is attributed the gameness which is such a characteristic of their latter-day representatives.

No one who is well acquainted with the Brussels Griffon would claim that the breed dates back, like the Greyhound, to hoary antiquity, or, indeed, that it has any pretensions to have "come over with the Conqueror." The dog is not less worthy of admiration on that account. It is futile to inquire too closely into his ancestry; like Topsy, "he growed" and we must love him for himself alone.

Even in the last fifteen years we can trace a certain advance in the evolution of the Brussels Griffon. When the breed was first introduced under this name into this country, underjaw was accounted of little or no importance, whereas now a prominent chin is rightly recognised as being one of the most important physical characteristics of the race. Then, again, quite a few years ago a Griffon with a red pin-wire coat was rarely met with, but now this point has been generally rectified, and every show specimen of any account whatever possesses the

much-desired covering.

The first authentic importations of Brussels Griffons into this country were made by Mrs. Kingscote, Miss Adela Gordon, Mrs. Frank Pearce, and Fletcher, who at that time (_circa_ 1894) kept a dog-shop in Regent Street. Mrs. Handley Spicer soon followed, and it was at her house that, in 1896, the Griffon Bruxellois Club was first suggested and then formed. The Brussels Griffon Club of London was a later offshoot of this club, and, like many children, would appear to be more vigorous than its parent. Griffons soon made their appearance at shows and won many admirers, though it must be admitted that their progress up the ladder of popularity was not so rapid as might have been expected. The breed is especially attractive in the following points: It is hardy, compact, portable, very intelligent, equally smart and alert in appearance, affectionate, very companionable, and, above all, it possesses the special characteristic of wonderful eyes, ever changing in expression, and compared with which the eyes of many other toy breeds appear as a glass bead to a fathomless lake.

Griffons are hardy little dogs, though, like most others, they are more susceptible to damp than to cold. While not greedy, like the Terrier tribe, they are usually good feeders and good doers, and not tiresomely dainty with regard to food, as is so often the case with Toy Spaniels. It must be admitted that Griffons are not the easiest of dogs to rear, particularly at weaning time. From five to eight weeks is always a critical period in the puppyhood of a Griffon, and it is necessary to supersede their maternal nourishment with extreme caution. Farinaceous foods do not answer, and usually cause trouble sooner or later. A small quantity of scraped raw beef--an eggspoonful at four weeks, increasing to a teaspoonful at six--may be given once a day, and from four to five weeks two additional meals of warm milk--goat's for preference--and not more than a tablespoonful at a time should be given. From five to six weeks the mother will remain

with the puppies at night only, and three milk meals may be given during the day, with one of scraped meat, at intervals of about four hours, care being taken to give too little milk rather than too much. At six weeks the puppies may usually be taken entirely from the mother, and at this time it is generally advisable to give a gentle vermifuge, such as Ruby. A very little German rusk may also be added to the milk meals, which may be increased to one and a-half tablespoonfuls at a time, but it must always be remembered that, in nine cases out of ten, trouble is caused by overfeeding rather than underfeeding, and until the rubicon of eight weeks has been passed, care and oversight should be unremitting. At eight weeks' old, Force or brown breadcrumbs may be added to the morning milk, chopped meat may be given instead of scraped at midday, the usual milk at tea-time, and a dry biscuit, such as Plasmon, for supper. At ten weeks old the milk at tea-time may be discontinued and the other meals increased accordingly, and very little further trouble need be feared, for Griffons very rarely suffer from teething troubles.

Brussels Griffons are divided into three groups, according to their appearance, and representatives of each group may be, and sometimes are, found in one and the same litter. First and foremost, both in importance and in beauty, comes the Griffon Bruxellois, a cobby, compact little dog, with wiry red coat, large eyes, short nose, well turned up, and sloping back, very prominent chin, and small ears. Secondly come the Griffons of any other colour, or, as they are termed in Brussels, Griffons Belges. These are very often Griffons of the usual colour, with a mismark of white or black, or occasionally they may be grey or fawn. But the most approved colour, and certainly the most attractive, is black and tan. The third group of Brussels Griffons is that termed "smooth," or, in Brussels, Griffons Brabancons. The smooth Griffon is identical with the rough in all points except for being short-haired. As is well known, smooth

Griffons are most useful for breeding rough ones with the desired hard red coat, and many well-known show dogs with rough coats have been bred from smooth ones: for example, Sparklets, Ch. Copthorne Lobster, Ch. Copthorne Treasure, Ch. Copthorne Talk-o'-the-Town, and Copthorne Blunderbuss. This and many other facts in connection with breeding Griffons will be learnt from experience, always the best teacher.

The descriptive particulars of the Brussels Griffon are:--

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GENERAL APPEARANCE--A lady's little dog--intelligent, sprightly, robust, of compact appearance--reminding one of a cob, and captivating the attention by a quasi-human expression. **HEAD**--Rounded, furnished with somewhat hard, irregular hairs, longer round the eyes, on the nose and cheeks. **EARS**--Erect when cropped as in Belgium, semi-erect when uncropped. **EYES**--Very large, black, or nearly black; eyelids edged with black, eyelashes long and black, eyebrows covered with hairs, leaving the eye they encircle perfectly uncovered. **NOSE**--Always black, short, surrounded with hair converging upward to meet those which surround the eyes. Very pronounced stop. **LIPS**--Edged with black, furnished with a moustache. A little black in the moustache is not a fault. **CHIN**--Prominent without showing the teeth, and edged with a small beard. **CHEST**--Rather wide and deep. **LEGS**--As straight as possible, of medium length. **TAIL**--Erect, and docked to two-thirds. **COLOUR**--In the Griffons Bruxellois, red; in the Griffons Belges, preferably black and tan, but also grey or fawn; in the Petit Brabancon, red or black and tan. **TEXTURE OF COAT**--Harsh and wiry, irregular, rather long and thick. In the Brabancon it is smooth and short. **WEIGHT**--Light weight, 5 lb. maximum; and heavy weight, 9 lb. maximum. **FAULTS**--The faults to be avoided are light eyes, silky hair on the head, brown nails, teeth showing, a hanging tongue or a brown nose.

