

For many months past a spirited controversy and correspondence on the Irish Wolfhound has been carried on in the *Live Stock Journal*—a well-known weekly publication—by the writer and others, without, it is confidently thought, in any way disturbing the conclusions on the breed which the writer has, from careful and prolonged consideration of the subject, arrived at, and which will be set forth presently.

The question as to whether it is desirable to continue and thoroughly resuscitate this superb breed now that his occupation is gone is hardly worth entertaining.

The Mastiff and Bulldog, though no longer used to bait bear and bull, abound in thousands and in a far more perfect form than they were a hundred years ago. The Bloodhound's original use has disappeared, yet who would wish to see these noble hounds allowed to die out?

Have not a dozen breeds—such as St. Bernard's, Colleys, &c.—been taken up, cherished, and improved to a marvellous degree? Why not, then, take such measures to recover the Irish Wolfdog in its original form? It can be done; the means are at hand if the *will* be only forthcoming. From the materials forthcoming in such specimens of the breed as are extant and the largest Deerhounds, with judicious crosses for size and power, there is little doubt that the breed can be restored to us in much of its original magnificence, and the noble canine giant—always held to be typical of Erin—would be worthily and faithfully represented.

It reflects but small credit on the gentlemen of Ireland that this breed—the national representative dog of their country—should have been allowed to dwindle down to a shadow of its former self. Mastiff breeders with much care and judgment have rescued England's national dog from a very degenerate state, and from most indifferent materials, and restored him in a form quite equal, if not superior, to what he was at his best. Why, then, should not the same be done for their most superb national dog by Irishmen?

Let them look to this, put their shoulders to the wheel, and success will surely crown their endeavours.

As the Deerhound of the present day is to the ordinary Greyhound, so is the giant Irish Wolfhound to the Deerhound. An Irish paper, waxing enthusiastic on the subject, says, not long ago, regarding the Irish Wolfdog:—"This animal has become celebrated as the heraldic protector of our country. Fair Erin sits pensively beside her harp, the round tower stands near, and guarding all three, reclines the Wolfhound. Scotland's lions have been famed in story; England 'stole' one of them, say some, and joining him in company with the unicorn, committed to his trust the honour of Albion; but the unicorn is a beast which even Dr. Haughton has never seen, while we must go back to the antediluvian era to find lions in Great Britain. But the Wolfdog is no mythic beast in Ireland; he was and we trust will again be included amongst the undoubted, exclusive, and most distinguished specimens of the Irish fauna."

In the British Museum there is a Grecian vase, some 450 B.C., on which Acæon is depicted surrounded by his dogs. Some of them would appear identical with what the Irish Wolfhound was, save, perhaps, in the matter of coat.

On some ancient frescoes at Easton Neston Hall, near Towcester, are depicted various hunting scenes. In one of these two vast dogs of Deerhound type are represented as seizing a boar, and these frescoes having been painted at a time when the Irish Wolfhound existed, may be looked upon as throwing considerable light on the real type of that breed. They are shown to be vast Deerhounds, with rough wiry coats, of a dark blue-grey colour; ears small and falling over.

It will have been noticed that several persons owning Irish Wolfhounds in former days were in the habit of styling them "the last of their race." It appears tolerably certain that the breed was gradually being merged into the present breed of Deerhounds, and each successive owner was