

MILLIONS SPENT IN RAISING DOGS FOR WEALTHY PATRONS



There are several millions of dollars invested in the breeding of highly pedigreed dogs in and around New York city, and millions more in New England. It is an industry that has many curious features, one of which is that a considerable part of it is in the hands of very rich men and women. Within a radius of 100 miles of New York there are more than 500 dog farms, declares a writer in the New York Press. They are called "kennels," but the buildings and the grounds surrounding them are handsome and extensive.

The ordinary pedigreed dog costs from \$100 or \$150 up, and a really fine dog of the most fashionable species will cost several thousands. There is no market price for such animals. It all depends on how much the covetous purchaser is willing to pay.

There are more than two score "dog farms" or kennels in New York city, nearly as many in Brooklyn and a few on Staten Island. The rest are scattered pretty evenly among the most fashionable suburbs. And you find them near every large city clear to the Pacific coast.

There is one region and only one where the craze for the costly dog has not penetrated, and that is the south. Aside from a few breeders of bloodhounds, who supply the professional demand, the southerner takes his dogs just as they come, with little inquiry into ancestry. The saying is that the poorer the family the more dogs they have. It is just the reverse up north.

The number of persons engaged in the breeding of valuable dogs has doubled in the last five years. A good many persons made a lot of money out of their kennels, and this has attracted others who are fond of dogs and need the money. Thus far the business has proved profitable for nearly every one who has gone into it intelligently, and there have been few failures or retirements.

The reason for this prosperity is that buying expensive dogs is fashionable these days. Any one can get a good idea of the widespread craze for costly dogs by taking a stroll along Riverside drive or through Central park in New York any forenoon or afternoon. If he is a good judge of dog values he will have no difficulty in figuring up the probable cost of the expensive canines he sees. There are sure to be hundreds of them, and an hour's walk will pass

at least \$500,000 worth of dogflesh out for an airing.

The finest thing going in the dog line, the classiest kind of canine, the ultra fashionable dog today is the West Highland white terrier. Most of these distinguished dogs now in the United States are of alien birth. They are so new that very few have been raised in this country. They are shaggy, square jawed little dogs of sparkling intelligence.

The casual observer does not see any points of beauty about them until he hears how much they cost. These first cousins of the Scotch terriers can be picked up for as little as \$1,000 when full grown. A blind puppy of this breed is worth \$150. These two sums are rock bottom quotations, and the prices run double and treble. There are 15 or 20 breeders and importers of these West Highland white terriers around New York, but they can not supply the demand.

The next most fashionable dog is also a shaggy haired animal—the Airedale—that comes from Scotland, too. The Airedale is a little "cannier" than the white terrier from the West Highlands, and is preferred by some persons who care more for the lovable qualities of the dog than for being in the fashion of the hour.

Neck and neck with the Airedale in the estimation of canine connoisseurs is the Boston terrier, which is by far the most popular of all dogs among the ordinary persons who want a household pet. The Boston terrier is not an expensive dog, compared with the West Highlands or the Airedales or the other expensive breeds. You can get a nice Boston puppy for \$5, a good dog for \$100 and real aristocrats, as far as lineage and "points" are concerned from \$200 up to \$1,000 and more.

Fox terriers are also much in demand. Good ones can be had at from \$50 up for young animals. Poodles of the fluffy window mop kind that were the rage a generation ago have declined in price. Good grades are now quoted at \$25, and the demand is slow, though steady.

The toy dog is an important element in the market, and is a distinct class by itself. They are so popular because they are so small that a woman can tuck one under her arm or into her muff when going for a walk or shopping. The Pomeranians—"Poms" for short—are the most popular; likewise the most costly. A good one is worth \$500, and a very good one a lot more. Pom puppies find a ready sale at from \$100 up.

There are a good many different kinds of Poms and their color determines their degree of fashion, at least for the moment. Certain colors and shades of Poms are in greater demand

among fashionable women than others. The market swings to and fro just as it does in furs and fabrics. Today the most fashionable and highest priced Pom is the black one. The next is the sable, then comes the white, and after that the blue and the orange.

One reason for the Pom's expensiveness is that it is very hard to breed and difficult to raise to maturity. The Pom is a German dog and has been evolved from the German breed of Spitz. The Spitz normally weighs about 25 pounds and the Pom three or four. Now, in evolving the breed from a large dog down to a tiny one, a lot of physical stamina has been lost, though there has been no noticeable impairment in intelligence.

The result is that out of each litter of Pom puppies not more than one or two reach their full development. It is the same with Poms as with other valuable breeds of dogs, however. Those that survive and reach maturity bring big prices, so the loss is more than made up.

Dog farmers are divided into three classes. The largest and most important, from the point of view of the amount of money invested and the high and expensive class of dogs produced, are the rich and well known people, both men and women, who specialize in various branches of the industry. They go into dog raising primarily for pleasure, and secondarily because the revenue from the dogs they sell comes to a pretty penny, which helps make up the deficit in the cost of their country estates.

The second class is composed of persons who are about as wealthy, but a little less prominent socially. With these dog farming is one of the avenues by which they may gain an entrance to more exclusive social circles. They are keen about getting good prices for their dogs, but less so than the first class of breeders.

In the third class are persons of good social connections and but little money, and persons who have no society standing at all, but have embarked in the breeding of dogs for the money there is in it.

When it comes to selling their dogs, the rich people at the top of the social ladder have a distinct advantage. Their kennels are famous all over the country and their dogs enjoy the highest reputations. Buyers from the kennels of the multimillionaires know they are getting the very best dogs that money and skillful care can produce.

Further than that, it enhances the value of the dog to be able to say that it is from such and such a well known person's kennels, and that it numbers among its ancestors certain famous champions and blue ribboners. The other dog raisers depend for the sale of their product on their acquaintances, on the exhibition of their dogs at the bench shows and on advertising in the periodicals devoted to dogs.

Among the well known people who have gone into dog raising extensively are a host of fashionable men and women. Robert Goelet, for instance, is

making a specialty of Scottish and West Highland white terriers. Mrs. Robert Guggenheim and Mrs. Clifford Harmon also have shown some excellent specimens from time to time lately. Miss Gertrude A. Davies, whose kennels are at Red Bank, N. J., has specialized in the giant St. Bernards. There are several breeders of collies. Among them is Samuel Untermyer, whose kennels are at Greystone, Tilden's old estate, up the Hudson. Untermyer thinks nothing of paying \$5,000 for a collie if he is the best of his kind.

The Never-Never-Land kennels, at Shelter Island heights, are owned by Mrs. Thomas Turner, who was Miss Mary Winthrop. She specializes in French bulldogs. In Greenwich, William G. Rockefeller's Rock Ridge kennels, where the famous beagles are raised, are known all over America. Henry P. Davison, one of Mr. Morgan's partners, goes in for Pekinese spaniels.

There is one great drawback about dog farming, however, just as there is about many other industries that are dependent on expert knowledge. It is most difficult to get competent help. Just now there is a demand for at least 200 intelligent women who know how to take care of dogs. The salaries that are waiting for them vary from \$150 to \$200 a month. Men who are proficient in the lore of dogs command rather better salaries—from \$200 a month up. The demand for such help far exceeds the supply. Delicate dogs are hard to raise.

A few years ago dogs were barred from the principal hotels in New York. Today many of the most fashionable and expensive hotels are advertising "a special welcome for four footed guests," and make a particular effort to look after their comfort. Quite a number of the pretty well known artists have found a profitable field in the painting of portraits of dogs. Among them are two or three women who make a specialty of painting miniatures of dogs. The charge for these is fully equal to that for a miniature portrait of a person by an artist of equal fame.