

Dane, but it differed from it greatly in the largeness of its size. It was quite white, and of a gentle and peaceable disposition."

From Goldsmith, about 1770, the following is extracted:—"The last variety, and the most wonderful of all that I shall mention, is the Great Irish Wolfdog, that may be considered as the first of the canine species. This animal, which is very rare even in the only country in the world where it is found, is rather kept for show than use, there being neither wolves nor any other formidable beast of prey in Ireland to require so powerful an antagonist. The Wolf-dog is therefore bred up in the houses of the great, or such gentlemen as choose to keep him as a curiosity, being neither good for hunting the hare, the fox, nor the stag, and equally unserviceable as a house dog. Nevertheless he is extremely beautiful and majestic in appearance, being the greatest of the dog kind to be seen in the world. The largest of those I have seen—and I have seen about a dozen—was about four feet high, or as tall as a calf of a year old. He was made extremely like a Greyhound, but more robust, and inclining to the figure of the French Mâtin or the Great Dane. His eye was mild, his colour white, and his nature seemed heavy and phlegmatic; this I ascribed to his having been bred up to a size beyond his nature. The greatest pains have been taken with these to enlarge the breed, both by food and matching. This end was effectually obtained indeed, for the size was enormous, but, as it seemed to me, at the expense of the animal's fierceness, vigilance, and sagacity. However, I was informed otherwise; the gentleman who bred them assuring me that a Mastiff would be nothing when opposed to one of them, who generally seized their antagonist by the back; he added that they would worry the strongest Bull-dog in a few minutes to death. But this did not appear either in their figure or their inclinations; they seemed rather more timid than the ordinary race of dogs, and their skin much thinner, and consequently

less fitted for combat. Whether with these disadvantages they were capable, as I was told, of singly coping with bears, others may determine; however, they have but few opportunities in their own country of exerting their strength, as all wild carnivorous animals there are only of the vermin kind. Mons. Buffon seems to be of the opinion that these are the true Molossian dogs of the ancients; he gives us reason for his opinion, and I am apt to think it ill grounded. Nemesianus, in giving directions for the choice of a bitch, advises to have one of Spartan or Molossian breed, and among several other perfections he says that the ears should be dependant and fluctuate as she runs."

"This is, however, by no means the case with the Irish Wolfdog, whose ears resemble those of the Greyhound, and are far from fluctuating with the animal's motions. But of whatever kind these dogs may be, whether known among the ancients or produced by a later mixture, they are now almost worn quite away, and are very rarely met with even in Ireland. If carried to other countries, they soon degenerate, and even at home, unless great care be taken, they quickly alter."

"They were once employed in clearing the island of wolves, which infested it in great plenty; but these being destroyed, the dogs also are wearing away, as if nature meant to blot out the species when they no longer had any services to perform."

Brooke, in his "Natural History" of 1772, states: "The Irish Wolfdog is, as 'Ray' affirms, the highest dog he had ever seen, he being much larger than a Mastiff dog, but more like a Greyhound in shape."

Smith, in his "History of Waterford" (1774), uses very similar words:—"The Irish Greyhound, though formerly abounding in this country, is likewise become nearly extinct. This dog is much taller than the Mastiff, but made more like a Greyhound."

Pennant (1776-81) informs us that the Irish Gre-hound—