

PEDIGREES

(This article was written in 1926 by the Rev. Rosslyn Bruce and was quoted in an article by his daughter, Mrs. R. Kirbeby-Peace, in the *Norfolk Newsletter*, England.)

"A pedigree may be both a help and a hindrance to a breeder. Wisely used, with a knowledge of what the names in it really represented in faults and merits during their lifetime, a pedigree is a star of guidance to wise men; but if relied on merely because it consists of numbers of Champion dogs and bitches, it becomes a mere will-o-the-wisp to lead the thoughtless to despair. Each name should suggest to the breeder some points of established value, and some tendency to avoid carefully. Moreover a good pedigree is of little value unless it reflects itself to some extent in its owner's appearance. 'A bad dog with a good pedigree is like a dead crocodile in a silk wedding dress'.

"The Chief Parts of a Pedigree. Experts have differed about the relative value of the different places in a pedigree. Galton taught that the two parents together represented half of the whole; four grandparents to a quarter, eight to an eighth, and so on in exact mathematical proportion; and his theory was accepted for a long time. Sir Everett Millais assumed it to hold, but sought for something to explain its inefficiency. Mendelism discards it completely and reveals the method of heredity by which qualities and groups of qualities descend wholly or in part from a line consisting of but one ancestor (male or female) in each generation; Mendelism explains but at present hardly guides, the methods of stock breeders. The 'line and family' system holds the field today; Bruce Lowe was its pioneer, and C.J. Davies and Rosslyn Bruce are its convinced exponents; the former wrote of British thoroughbred race horses, the latter two of Scottish Terriers and Fox Terriers respectively. The books of each of these writers are difficult to procure, but the system can be briefly outlined thus: In all pedigrees the most important part is the bottom line, that is the dam, then her dam, then her Grand-dam, or what is called in heredity the 'tail female'; after that comes the sire, and his sire and his sire again, or the 'tail male'; the remainder or inside of a pedigree will generally cancel itself out and prove of little importance."