

GOAT.

GOAT (*Capra*), a genus of ruminant quadrupeds of the family *Capridæ* (q. v.), so closely allied to the sheep that it is not easy exactly to define the distinction, although the common domestic goat and sheep are of widely different appearance. One of the most marked of the distinguishing characters is, that the horns of goats are directed upwards, backwards, and outwards, whilst those of sheep are more or less spirally twisted. Another character is the beard on the chin of the male goats, which is wanting in the sheep; but these characters are not perfectly constant. Perhaps a more constant character is the straight line of the face in goats, as compared with the arched line in sheep. The tail of goats is also much shorter than that of sheep. A curious but constant mark of distinction is the want of a small pit, producing a fatty secretion between the toes, in goats, which exists in sheep, and is peculiar to them. And another constant mark is the strong smell of male goats, particularly during the rutting season, which is wanting in sheep. Equally constant are the differences of temper and manners, goats being in a high degree curious and confident, and the very term *capricious* referring to their exhibition of the quality which it denotes. In both goats and sheep, both sexes are usually furnished with horns, the want of which is a variation apparently caused by domestication, and is most frequent in females. The horns and beard

GOAT

of female goats are always smaller than those of the male. Some goats have horns three feet long.

Goats are found wild only in mountainous countries; they all exhibit a great aptitude for scrambling among rocks and bushes, are extremely sure-footed on narrow ledges and pinnacles, and display great strength and agility in leaping. They also prefer as food the leaves and small branches of shrubs, and the strongly aromatic herbs which abound in mountainous situations, to the herbage of the richest pastures. The Greeks and Romans sacrificed the goat to Bacchus, as an enemy of the vine. It is difficult in this genus to determine what are species and what are varieties. The COMMON or DOMESTIC GOAT (*C. hircus*) has existed as a



Common Goat (*Capra hircus*).

domestic animal from the earliest ages; it is frequently mentioned in the books of Moses, and formed a large portion of the flocks of the patriarchs. It adapts itself to almost all climates, and thrives under the care of man in the hottest parts of India and Africa, and with the protection only of a shed from the severity of winter, in the northern districts of Scandinavia. Amidst such diversity of circumstances, considerable diversity of breeds might be expected, and accordingly, besides the variety common in Britain, there are the Syrian Goat, the Angora (q. v.) Goat, the Cashmere (q. v.) Goat, all remarkable for the greater length and fineness of their hair; a beautiful dwarf variety from West Africa, called the Guinea Goat, and many others. Some of these, as the Syrian goat, have large pendent ears. In nothing does variation seem more readily to result from the influence of climate and other circumstances, than in the quantity and quality of the hair, and in the relative abundance of the two kinds of it, both of which are well exhibited in the common goat, the long soft hair, and the softer woolly hair beneath it. But in many other respects, also, the domestic goat is subject to variation, more than perhaps any other domestic quadruped except the dog.

Goats can be kept with advantage in situations too rocky, or where the herbage is too scanty for oxen or sheep. They were formerly kept in greater numbers in Britain than they now are. On some of the mountains of Wales and of Scotland, the goat is almost as completely wild as if it were indigenous, and even to get within shot of it is difficult. It is capable, however, of the most perfect domestication, and becomes extremely attached and familiar. It is apt, indeed, to prove a troublesome pet, and makes use of its horns, although not angrily, much more freely than is at all agreeable.

The uses of the goat are numerous. The flesh is good; that of the kid, or young goat, is in most countries esteemed a delicacy. The milk is very rich and nutritious, more easy of digestion than that of the cow, and is often useful to consumptive

patients. Some goats yield as much as four quarts of milk daily, although the average quantity is more nearly two. Both cheese and butter are made of goats' milk; they have a peculiar but not disagreeable flavour. Goats' milk is still very much used in Syria and other parts of the East, as it was in the days of the patriarchs. The skin of the goat was early used for clothing, and is now dressed as leather for many uses, particularly for making gloves and the finer kinds of shoes. The hair, which may be advantageously clipped annually, is used for making ropes which are indestructible in water, and for making wigs for judges, barristers, and ecclesiastical dignitaries. For the latter purpose, the hair of white goats is used. The use of the hair or wool of certain varieties of goat for making valuable fabrics is noticed in the articles ANGORA and CASHMERE GOAT. The horns are used for making knife-handles, &c., and the fat is said to be superior to that of the ox for candles. In Holland, goats are employed in drawing children's coaches, to which as many as four are sometimes harnessed together, and they are sufficiently tractable and obedient to the rein.

The goat generally produces two young ones at a time. A hybrid between the goat and the sheep has been produced, and it has been described as fertile, but there is no evidence of fertility except in connection with one of the parent races.

The origin of the domestic goat is with greatest probability traced to the AEGAGRUS (*C. Aegagrus*), which many naturalists confidently identify with it, and which is found on Caucasus and on many of the mountains of Asia. It is called *Paseng* in Persia. Its legs are longer than those of the domestic goat; its horns are very large, larger in proportion than those of any other known ruminant.

—Another wild species is the JEMLAH GOAT (*C. Jemlaica*), which inhabits the district of Jemlah, between the sources of the Sargew and the Sanpoo, the most elevated range of Central Asia; very similar to which, if really distinct, is the JAHRAL (*C. Jahral*) of Nepal. These, however, have no true beard, although they otherwise abound in long hair.—Other species or varieties of goat, of which the BOUQUETIN (q. v.) is one, are associated under the name IBEX (q. v.).—All the species are natives of the Old World.