

# CAT GOSSIP

Phone : Battersea 4358

No. 4

DECEMBER 29th, 1926

Price 3d., post free

Cat's-meat, Cat's-meat—meat, I cry,  
On a skewer—come and buy ;  
From Hyde Park Corner to Wapping Wall  
All the year I Cat's-meat bawl :  
Cat's-meat, Cat's-meat,—meat, I cry,  
On a skewer—come and buy.

The above was sung to the tune of "Cherry Ripe" in some burlesque given in London nearly a century ago.

BEFORE we meet again, dear readers, another year will have passed away, and we shall be entering with all kinds of hopes upon 1927. To all ye who love Cats, CAT GOSSIP tenders the very best wishes. May your queens be fertile and your kittens numerous: may your studs be sires of cracks and the Judges kind: may distemper and that other fiend, enteritis, pass by your gates: in short, we wish you a very Happy and Prosperous New Year! Do you reciprocate our good wishes? Then pray let your good wishes take the practical form of sending us promptly Catty news items, and of advertising with us your Studs and stock for sale: for in Catdom as elsewhere, "'tis money makes the mare to go."

## GOSSIP OF THE WEEK

The year which is now passing has brought about some sad partings. At the very outset we lost the "Fairy Godmother of the Cat Fancy," that indefatigable worker for the cat, Miss Frances Simpson, whose tongue and pen for half a century have been placed at the service of Puss. And only recently Mrs. Esdaile left us, just as she was entering on a new sphere of work as a member of the G.C. Here, too, changes have occurred, and two notable members have retired from office. Thanks be, however, they are still with us in other capacities, and long may it be so!

The white Australian S.H. cats which, it is said, will be seen at the Southern Counties, will no doubt arouse much interest. From the description of them given me by the owner of the original specimens, they would seem to be of a decidedly Oriental type, slender legged, long in build, with big ears, arched noses, and rather pointed face. In Helen K. Winslow's book, *Concerning Cats* (1900), there is a very good photo of an Australian cat (of course, no cat species is native to Australia), owned by Dr. H. L. Hammond,

of Killingly, Connecticut. This was apparently a very fine-coated cat, beautifully "mackerel-striped," with very big ears and arched face. It says there: "Some authorities claim that the cats known in this country (America) as Australian cats are of Siamese origin." About 1900 or 1901, I think, I owned a cat brought by a sailor from Australia. I fancy I exhibited him once or twice. He was a small cat of decidedly Oriental type, a grey, "spotted tabby," thin legged, with large ears, arched forehead, pointed small face, and a tail of normal length, but with three kinks or breaks equidistant down its length.

Quite by chance I came across a reference to this Australian Cat in *Our Cats* for March, 1902. I cannot now be sure by whom written, but I fancy by my old friend Mrs. Leuty Collins. It says:—"An interesting little spotted cat from Australia. This animal's peculiarity is a triple-kinked tail and very curious hind-quarters. We don't know if it would be right to describe this as kangaroo-like" (No, it wouldn't—Ed.) "but certainly we never saw a cat so well furnished for a squatting position, the curve from the heels going deep into the fleshy part of the hind-legs, and suggesting a long, leaping gait. The kinks are knots in the joints on which it might rest at different angles if employed, and as you pass the hand along the tail it is as if it had been broken and set again. The handsome Indischer Fuerst (Indian red S.H.) keeps up the hoarse wail the live-long day, but one of the four Abyssinians lives in amity with the white she-wolf and the guinea-pigs, and the Geoffroy's Cat in the cage in the greenhouse scowls down at all of them."

Twenty-five years ago this week the following par. appeared in *Our Cats*:—"The sensational item of the week is, of course, the meeting of 'independent' cat fanciers at the Great Western Hotel, Paddington. . . . There was a lot of speaking done, and some people were very insulting to other people—but nothing really happened—as usual." This, of course, was a development of the N.C.C. v. Cat Club affair. Well, well, we're more peaceful nowadays, but also, I fear, less energetic. Some sections of the Fancy to-day could do with a lot of gingering up. Did someone whisper "And some Secretaries?"

In the same number I read, what I had quite forgotten, that I was judging at the Palace that December, the only other judge still to the fore being my old rival in Foreign Cats and Dogs, the Hon. Mrs. McLaren Morrison.

This week, in 1901, I observe there was a rumour that white Persians were being killed to make Corona-

tion fur, and Mr. Colam, the then Secretary of the R.S.P.C.A., wrote that his Society would investigate any particulars tending to substantiate such statements.

\* \* \* \* \*

I find also this interesting reference:—In the A.O.C. class Mrs. Boutcher's curious cat won, a mixture of colours. Lord Sylvester suggested the starting of a new breed called 'Marked Silvers.' This did not come into effect.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anent tails: I find I wrote in *Our Cats* in the year 1900 the following comment on an amusing occurrence: "Quite recently the farce was enacted of a cat winning in succession as a Manx and as a Japanese cat. Originally, we are told, of Manx parentage, it was then shown as Japanese because some 'Connoisseurs (ye gods) of foreign cats' declared it must be a Jap because it had a kink in its tail! Well, even in these days (about 1900) we have seen a Ringtailed Lemur getting an award as a foreign cat at the Palace—and quite a lively newspaper discussion on the matter ensued both in the lay and the Fancy Press, the owner of the quadrumanous pet in question stoutly contending it to be a cat, simply because in those days sailors often brought home Lemurs and called them Madagascar Cats.

\* \* \* \* \*

Always anxious to learn something about curious foreign sorts of cats, I had a chat with the world famous wild animal photographer, Mr. Cherry Kearton, and his wife—who before marriage was the famous South African singer Ada Forrest. I was particularly anxious to know if he had ever seen anything of the wire-haired Mombassa cat referred to in certain old Natural History works; but so far from having seen anything so remarkable, they could not remember seeing any domestic cats in Mombassa. Some of those old writers were either, well, very imaginative, or credulous enough to make a confidence-trick expert weep for joy!

\* \* \* \* \*

I often think Continental Show authorities make a greater effort to draw gate-money by some kind of special exhibit than our's usually do, and I am sure it is good policy. When I showed a Civet and an Egyptian Cat at Croydon, and they were billed and mentioned in the local Press, quite a lot of local people came just to see them. At last Vienna Cat Show there were Tibet Cats, Civets or Genets (do you remember Dr. Alder's Genet at Croydon three years ago?) Ocelots or other spotted, and Wild Cats. And, of course, for "donkeys years" Continental Shows have offered prizes for the mythical? Drop-eared Chinese Cat, which invariably fails to materialise; though one is always meeting someone who knows someone whose friends has often seen them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The "Peke-faced cat," which some of our breeders produce now and then, is not confined to this country. My friend Herr Joe Lesti of Vienna recently obtained a short-haired kitten, with protruding underjaw, nose pushed well back, bandy forelegs and slight cowhocked hind legs. He thinks, as I do, that this is a rickety formation and nothing else, but said of his specimen, that did one not know such a cross to be impossible, one might imagine the presence of Bulldog blood. If one of the Peke-faced ones would only drop its ears the mystery of the Chinese Cat would be explained.

These Peke-faced cats are evidently not merely a product of to-day, for in C.H. Ross. *The Book of Cats*, 1867. I find the following description, which possibly applies to a litter of these:—"Here is a bit of my own experience. I once had in my possession a very life-like picture of a remarkably ugly bulldog, which hung in a frame over a piano in the drawing-room. With some surprise I noticed that a favourite cat would climb upon the piano, and sitting close under the picture fix its eyes on the dog's face, and putting back its ears, remain thus, with a wild and terrified expression, for as long as an hour at a time. Two dogs formed part of the household, and with these she was on friendly terms. . . . Puss seemed, while hating, to be unable to break the spell this picture had over her, to the contemplation of which she returned again and again, though frequently sent away. During the time that we noticed this conduct on the cat's part, she was with kitten, and when the four kittens were born they were dead, and one of them, strange to say, had a bulldog shaped head, marked almost exactly like the picture."

\* \* \* \* \*

We have to announce the following features which will appear within the next few weeks, and shall be grateful if our subscribers will kindly call the attention of any of their cat-loving friends to them. *An Egyptian Cat*: story of cat-life by Mrs. T. W. Richardson. *Siamese Cats*, catty story by Miss Helen Noble. *The Malay Cat*, by the Editor, being the most complete article ever published descriptive of this; the mysterious poor cousin of the Royal Siamese. *The American Bob-tail Cat*, descriptive notes by Helen E. Brown, late Editor of *The Cat Review*. We shall also give particulars of a competition open to our subscribers only.

\* \* \* \* \*

We will also, during January, refund the quarter's subscription of any subscriber sending us the names and subscriptions of six new quarterly subscribers.

## IS THE SIAMESE THE OLD EGYPTIAN CAT?

(Translated from "Chasse et Peche" by H.C.B.)

By ARMAND STEENS.

IF I greatly admire the Siamese Cat, the reason is doubtless because my imagination persists in thinking of him at the period in which he was the incarnation of a divinity. As a matter of fact, to me the cat of the Pharaohs was none other than the Siamese cat. Even at the present day, does not his sunny coat reflect the marvellous rays which Ammon shed upon him? And his blue eyes, do they not seem carved out of that lapis-lazuli which the gold workers of Egypt so freely inserted in their idols? His inextinguishable longing for warmth and the rays of the sun is, I feel certain, but a nostalgic impulse towards that far distant epoch when the Sun God illuminated his little soul with his beams.

Quite lately, when showing me an Egyptian statuette in green enamel, representing a cat, my friend, Dr. Hasse, put forward the hypothesis that this Egyptian

type might well be a brother of the Siamese. I am not aware if this hypothesis was merely a supposition on his part or whether it had any scientific groundwork. It certainly is the case that the Egyptologist, Maspero, has established that the Egyptian Cat was of Indian origin, and according to Dr. Jumaud, the Secretary of the Cat Club de France, the habitat of the Siamese Cat is precisely that region which encircles Siam, Burma and part of India. From a very early period caravans descended from the Indus and the Euphrates to Palestine, and thence to Egypt to exchange their merchandise for the products of the Nile, and in their peregrinations they brought with them the cats of their country, seeing that the Egyptians regarded cats as being very precious animals. As a matter of fact, in a story of ancient Egypt, published by Lepsius, and translated by Chabas, the Egyptian Prince Sinouhit dreads being despoiled of "his cats," his goats, and his cows, and the foremost place occupied by the first-named in this enumeration proves clearly what value was attached to their possession. Thus, it is evident that the Asiatic merchants were accustomed to exchange them on the banks of the Nile for jewellery, fine cloth and enamelled pottery.

If we observe the cats which the sculptors of Sesostrius chiselled upon their steles we are struck by a resemblance which they show to the royal Siamese; the same slender paws, the same pointed ears, the same long tail and elongated face, even the same slenderness in the entire silhouette. The front paws are long and slender and the nose slightly flattened, points which are also characteristic of our Siamese. Even a moral resemblance is to be found there for we know that the Siamese is exceptionally intelligent. Dr. Jumaud in his work *Les Races de Chats* establishes that the total weight of the brain averages so much in the Siamese breed, rather less in the common variety, and still less in the Iberian race. The Egyptian cat had the reputation of being very clever with a tendency to artfulness, to such an extent that the romancers of ancient Thebes credited it with a reputation for cunning which has followed it through the centuries in every country. About the year 1500 before our era, an artist contemporary with Tutankhamen amused himself by illustrating his fables. Lepsius shows us these drawings in which notably the jackal and the cat get the better by cunning of the poor trusting animals which they wish to devour. Elsewhere the same two companions, dressed as shepherds, wallet on back and crook on shoulder, having become, by a subterfuge, the guides of a flock of naive young geese, conduct them cheerfully towards a spot suitable for the slaughter. In another place, again, a she-cat, prettily crowned with flowers, is carrying on a discussion with a little white goose, whose final tragic fate one may easily guess. And yet again the artist depicts for us a judge with an ass's head who is listening to the complaints of an unhappy ox about the depredations of Minet.\* To judge by the humble and contrite air of the guilty one, we can foretell that he will win the day and that the plaintiff will have his trouble for nothing.

I cannot refrain from comparing this reputation for cunning and intelligence with the fact mentioned above, that the Siamese is precisely the most intelligent of all his kin; it certainly is not the Angora, handsome, but indolent as an Oriental Prince, who would ever have been accused of trickery and robbery. The physical and moral portrait of the Siamese cat appears then to adapt itself in every point to the so complete image which the ancient Egyptians have bequeathed to us of their deified cats and I hope with all my heart that

the facts which I have here enumerated will serve to maintain amongst the friends of the Siamese the pretty fancy that their little favourite is descended from the ancient gods, and that the blue blood of the goddess Bast still flows to-day in his veins.

\*Minet or Minette: French equivalent of "Puss."

In an American paper I find this advertisement:—  
Wanted, Mother Cats for feeding young foxes: kittens not over one week old: good care and treatment given. Highland Fox and Fur Farm.

Some time ago Miss Rhodes wrote me from Wakefield that two of her cats kitted on the last days of April, and at the same time she found an orphan leveret which, as it would not feed from a pen-filler, she gave to the Tabby cat, who looked after it all day, but by the next morning the black cat had taken it. From then the whole party made one family, cats, kittens and leveret all snuggle up together. The young rodent used to look very pretty hopping about over the feline family.

A pathetic story comes from a lady who has a lethal chamber, which makes one's blood boil at the selfishness of some people. It appears that a lady (?) with a Pomeranian went into a shop where, behind the counter, was a cat nursing some baby kittens. Following the usual canine practice, the dog went and routed them out, and naturally got scratched. Whereupon the "lady"—a good customer at this little shop, furiously insisted on the cat being destroyed if her custom was to be retained. My informant said it made her howl to see how the poor cat snuggled her kittens up to her in the lethal box, regardless of her own uneasiness, and so all passed away together. There is too much of this beastly selfishness, this total disregard of the rights of cats and cat owners, amongst dog owners. Too many encourage their dogs to chase cats or smilingly allow them to do so; but if the poor cat, driven desperate, or maybe in defence of her kit, wipes the yapping foe across the snout, the latter yells pen-and-ink, and then the cry is "Oh, the horrid cat!" it ought to be drowned! look how it's scratched Fido's nose!"—and Fido is made much of and his boko anointed with healing balm, whereas he ought really to get the whip for cat chasing. A properly trained dog will not interfere with cats.

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# THE BLACK PERSIAN CAT

BY MRS. EVANS.

The suggestion of our editor that I should write something about the black Persian was rather alarming as I am not used to seeing myself in print. On reflection, however, I concluded that limits of space, mercifully prescribed, would save both myself and readers much toil, and that it would suffice to get down quite simply my small experiences and ideas which may, I trust, of some real use to novices, relying on the indulgence of both Editor and the Fancy if, neither in point of style nor originality, my effort should be very successful.

Curiously my entry into the Cat Fancy was brought about by my becoming possessed of a nice black Persian Queen of unknown pedigree, who insisted on establishing herself with me, and whose owner subsequently made me a present of her. This cat gave me some very nice mixed litters, especially blue and tortoiseshell. Some time afterwards, in 1919, it was pointed out to me that the Blacks were badly neglected and I became interested in the endeavour to restore this beautiful variety to its proper place in the Fancy, a tolerably ambitious undertaking in view of the position as it was then. The famous Longhair Champion Dirty Dick had either retired or was dead, and one could count almost on the fingers of one hand the well-known representatives at that time, whilst the classes at the Shows were poor and attracted very little public interest, for outside the Fancy it had apparently begun to be thought that Persian Cats were necessarily blue.

Here, then, was my first difficulty; the field for mating was very limited and the market for kittens was not favourable. As to mating, I was urged to use blues or reds, reverting to black in the latter case via the ever useful tortoiseshell.

I very shortly came to the conclusion, which later experience has confirmed, that what I wanted to do was not to be accomplished that way, and it became evident that I must have a stud of my own and establish a strain while seeking diligently for blacks of other owners, so as on the one hand, to reach the standard I had in mind, and on the other to make provision for the extension of the variety and to avoid undue inbreeding. Living almost in London I have been restricted as to the number of cats I could keep and altogether it has been rather uphill work; but I am beginning to feel that in my small way I have done something. My greater helper has been my Champion Heathside Flanark, who really does almost fulfil my demands of what a black should be. He is certainly the blackest Longhair cat I have seen, glossy as satin, big, strong and healthy, with a massive head, small, well-set ears and fine orange eyes. At last he has begun to make himself felt, and the recent successes of his progeny and their kittens have cheered me greatly.

The coat of a Black Persian should be, not only uniformly black all over, but also *each* hair black from the tips to the root; alas, how very rare this is! And here I must entreat every new recruit to the breeding of Blacks to make for the ideal and to stick to the principle, firstly of mating Black to Black, and secondly in the matter of selection with a big S.

which has been in the past so sadly neglected, to choose for breeding from those strains only which can show the blackest Pedigree. I would go so far as to say that from the colour point of view, I would rather risk at this stage, an occasional black short-hair cross, which has a good black pedigree, that allow mixtures. I am well aware that this is something of a challenge to many experienced opinions, but I have no doubt about it. To mate a queen of another colour to a black for experimental purposes, such as to get deeper markings in a tabby strain or to procure sounder tortoiseshells, etc., is another matter, but if only breeders would weed out all the blacks that resulted from these matings, I do not think we should see so many dismal looking blacks about. One word of caution: black kittens are frequently born, or become in a few weeks, a bad colour and should not be discarded for this cause if otherwise satisfactory; if the breeding is right this colour will come out and improve after the litter coat is shed.

My search for information regarding the various Pedigrees of the winning Black Longhairs of the past decade or more, leaves me in no doubt whatever that the colour in this breed has never been seriously taken in hand. The coat of a Black Persian should be long and flowing, as soft as the softest satin and as glossy; there is at present less length and less spread of ruffle and brush than in the Blues for instance, and I hope to see this altered. As to the shape and eye-colour, the description of my Ch. Flanark should suffice.

Having established the Standard set by the best blacks now living there is no reason why it should not be maintained and even improved. I am sure that the Black Persian at its best has only to become known to become popular both inside and outside the Fancy. but what we have to do is to see that it *is* at its best,

## CORRESPONDENCE

*The Editor, CAT GOSSIP.*

Sir,

I have heard of Royal Siamese Palace Cats, and of Temple Cats, but no one seems to know what is the difference between them. As your paper seems to be specially interested in this lovely breed, perhaps I shall now obtain the desired information through your columns.

ENQUIRER (Folkestone).

\* \* \* \* \*

Siamese at Newcastle.

Sir,

As Chairman of the Siamese Cat Club Committee, I feel it my duty to draw attention to the exceedingly small entry of Siamese at Newcastle Show. This in my humble opinion could have been obviated, at the cost of a few minutes' work and a few pence, had the Secretary of the Show wished to further the efforts made by the S.C.C. to help the Show.

The classification was small, but quite large enough for a Show so far away, and two out of the three classes were guaranteed by the S.C.C., added to which a Club Judge undertook the long journey at the request of the Club, and any expense incurred was also guaranteed by the Club.

These efforts were surely ill-repaid by an entry of four adults and four kittens, which might easily have been otherwise if the Show Secretary had taken the trouble to send out a few S.O.S. postcards to some of the leading Siamese exhibitors, just before entries closed, or even later if necessary. As an old Secretary of Shows, I am only too well aware of the enormous work entailed in running a show, without going outside ordinary routine, but in a case of this sort where a Specialist Club is doing its utmost to support the Show, I do think a little extra effort or work on the part of the Secretary's office staff of that Show and an outlay of a few pence in postcards and postage would not have been wasted and would have had the effect of turning the Siamese classes into a big success instead of the failure they appear to have been, and have given the people up North a chance of seeing a good collection of the breed, as well as encouraging the S. C. C. to continue their efforts another year.

E. SYDNEY WOODIWISS.

Danbury, Essex.

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