

CAT GOSSIP

Phone : Battersea 4358

No. 7

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OBITUARY.

**Champion KATZENJAMMER'S GHOST
of Cademuir.
Died January 13th.**

WE are very, very sorry to have to record the death of Miss Hill-Shaw's magnificent Manx, which occurred this week, apparently from pneumonia. It is not so long ago that our very good friend had to mourn the loss of her old pet, Ch. Finchley Boy, who was, however, full of years and honours; but "Squin," as he was called, was yet in the prime of life. Like many Manx, he was a cat of great individuality of character, and his owner is heart-broken at her loss. He was sent by Mr. J. Killip of Douglas, who has exported several good Manx, to Mr. H. C. Brooke and sold by him to Miss Hill-Shaw. His portrait appeared in an early number of *Cat Gossip*.

We would draw our readers' attention to the notice of the Animal Lovers' League Meeting held last week, which appears on another page. The object of this League is one which should specially appeal to all true Cat-lovers, whilst dog-lovers are also interested, and we hope our readers will do their best to support its worthy aims.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK

We have received a letter from Lady Eardley Wilmot complaining that our Newcastle report contained no mention of her blue L.H. Gentleman of Henley in those classes where he was not at the top, and where he *did* win there was no criticism. We must point out that our reporters labour under very great handicaps as compared with those of our contemporary, which usually obtains its reports from the Judges, who have their books to refer to and have the best possible opportunity for observing the cats at their leisure. Many persons do not like Judges' reports, considering that their views are sufficiently shown by their placings, and wish for independent reports. The independent reporter, on the other hand, frequently cannot see the cats till late in the day when the pens are crowded; possibly the cat may be out of its pen when the reporter goes round, and he or she may have no opportunity of returning again to look at it. The presence of numerous cards on the pen may also add to the difficulty. The work of an independent reporter on big classes at a one day show is difficult in the extreme. We are glad to see that Gentleman of Henley obtained his third Challenge Certificate at Leicester and is now a full blown champion.

The Blue Persian Kittens, Cyrus and Tamar of Downside, recently sent to M. Steens of Antwerp by Mrs. Kidd, again won first in their classes at the late Brussels Show.

Our contemporary *The Animals' Friend* gives this remarkable instance of the reasoning powers and wonderful affectionate forethought in the Cat,—that animal to which a Mr. Neil Bell thought fit to devote a third of a column, headed "The Unspeakable Cat" in one of our great dailies, in the endeavour to prove that no cat had ever been known to show any virtues whatever!—Recently there occurred near Worksop, Notts, a remarkable incident illustrative of the maternal solicitude of a cat.

A fine tabby had three kittens, two of whom were taken from her and drowned, and one only allowed to remain to console her. Naturally, she was devoted to her charge, and tended it most assiduously.

Unfortunately, however, the devoted mother ate some poisoned meat, and her condition rapidly grew serious.

There was the welfare of the kitten to be thought about. At the house of a neighbour lived another female cat, who had just been deprived of the whole of her litter and was disconsolate.

So Tabby took her precious charge and presented it to the bereaved mother, who accepted it with purrings of delight, and immediately took charge of the youngster.

Then Tabby crept away, and a day later, her body was found stretched cold and stiff in death.

* * * * *

In the same paper for this month we note this pleasing item:—

"Our Surplus Cats.

A suggestion was lately made by *The Animals' Friend* that a popular lecture should be given in the poorer districts to adults as to the care of cats, the reason for the stray-cat problem, and on the best way to lessen the evil.

The idea was taken up sympathetically, and the first lecture of the kind given at *The Quest*, Notting Hill Gate, on November 22 by Mrs. M. Dudley Ward, who is a devoted friend to all cats, and one who wants to see their status raised. People really need telling in a simple, straightforward manner what are the reasons and what are the remedies for the overwhelming number of outcasts.

Let them learn these, and also see that their children are trained to treat animals properly, so that even a stray need not suffer persecution as well as homelessness.

Mrs. Dudley Ward will gladly co-operate with anyone in other districts where meetings can be arranged. She has a series of good slides to demonstrate 'Puss as she ought to be.' We think ourselves that pictures of the terrible side of cats' lives are not desirable. We are very appreciative of the lengthy report of her lecture in the *Bayswater Chronicle* for November 27."

This is, of course, a direct result of the horrible craze for furs. When Archie Boyles of Pangbourne, was fined £1 at Reading yesterday for maliciously killing a cat, he admitted dashing its head against a post, taking the animal home and skinning it, his intention being to sell the fur.

* * * * *

We greatly regret to hear of the death of Mr. A. Percival's well-known Siamese Stud, Champion Slightly, which took place on Wednesday last.

The Felines as Auxiliaries of Sportsman and Hunter

By THE EDITOR.

AMONGST those who take a wider interest in the Cat—and by a wider interest I mean questions outside the narrow field of "Fancy"—for, interesting though it be, and greatly though it has contributed to the standing of the Cat—the purely Fancy view point is really a very restricted one, and some members of every Fancy are too apt to confine their interest entirely to mere questions of shows and prize-winning—the question not infrequently arises in the mind, as to why so little use has been made, through the ages, of the feline tribe.

Probably the chief and principal reason is to be found in the independence of the cat nature. The Dog soon makes himself a willing slave, to an extent even which at times is almost nauseating but the mentality of the Cat will never permit him to be your slave; and this delightfully independent spirit, which will never allow him to cringe and fawn when ill-treated, is to my mind one of his greatest charms. It arises not from lack of intelligence—did not that great thinker Romanes write: "The cat is unquestionably a higher intelligent animal, though when contrasted with its great domestic rival, the dog, its intelligence, from being cast in quite a different mould, is very frequently overrated;"—not from lack of affection, for the cat, if given as much affection as often falls to the lot of the dog, will repay it as well with as

genuine and devoted affection. There are too many instances of cats which have sacrificed their lives in defence of their owners, or even of other household pets; of cats which have died on their dead owner's graves, or pined away when the beloved master or mistress no longer gladdened their lives, to allow any thinking and reasonable person to doubt the depth of affection innate in the feline heart, dormant, perhaps, yet wanting but the life-giving rain and sunshine of kindness and understanding to bring it to its full development. Certain physical characteristics of the dog tribe, it must be freely admitted, make them more capable of being used as auxiliaries, but the almost absolute neglect of the cat tribe in modern times, appears to me to reflect not upon the cats, but upon the mentality of modern humanity which would seem, with but few exceptions, incapable of justly appreciating their capacities as did some of the ancient civilisations. Naturally, when this topic is mooted, the first instance which leaps to the mind is that of the cats of ancient Egypt, which are time and again represented as the companions of the hunter and sportsman, just as modern pictures would represent him accompanied by his dog. The classic and oft-quoted instance of this is the beautiful Theban wall-painting in the British Museum, taken from the tomb at Thebes of the scribe Amen-em-Heb, who flourished some three thousand years ago. In this extraordinarily detailed scene we find the portrait of the deceased, who would seem to have been a keen wildfowler, pursuing birds in a marsh, accompanied by his wife and daughter, and by a tiger-striped brown cat, which is depicted in the very act of assisting its master by seizing birds with claws and teeth. "In New Kingdom pictures," says the author of the *Archaeological Survey to Egypt*, "tame cats are often seen accompanying the sportsman," and from the pictures it may be deduced that in those days, when the true worth of the cat was fully appreciated, these animals customarily carried out the work now detailed to retriever or spaniel. How true appear to us the words put by Louis Tracy into the mouth of one of his characters in *The Black Cat*: "The ancient Egyptians worshipped the Cat. We modern seekers after foolish things have forgotten—nay, we never have known—the love, the wisdom, the true nobility of the Cat!"

The general dislike of the cat to water has been used as an argument to support the theory that those "sporting" Egyptian cats must have been "different." This anti-water argument will, however, not hold water. Last year one of our Continental contemporaries gave quite a number of instances of ordinary cats catching fish, even diving into the river and taking their prey in this remarkable manner. I have myself known a cat which would plunge into a stream and catch rats. A member of the Siamese Club, Miss Phyllis Leatherdale, gives me the following instances of cats voluntarily entering the water (one of these also bears testimony to the great affections of which the *properly treated* Cat is capable even though a writer in one of our greatest dailies did, in his ignorance, write it down as incapable of all good feelings). Such instances could be multiplied and go to prove that it is chiefly owing to our modern almost complete misunderstanding of the feline nature that the cat has nowadays been ousted from the position it held in days of yore. Miss Leatherdale writes me:—"A female tabby cat we had used to follow us into the sea till the waves almost covered her back, crying all the time, evidently thinking we should be drowned. . . . A neighbour told me that her cat came in wringing wet one day, and she accused the man next door of throwing her in the river. One day shortly after she watched

the cat chase a rat into the river: jumping in after it, she caught the rat in the water by the scruff of the neck, and swam across the river, climbing out on the other side dragging the rat with her." These and similar instances which might be multiplied *ad. lib.*, coupled with the fact that some cats display a very strong retrieving instinct, go to prove that the performances of the cats of Old Nile were by no means phenomenal.

Many of the wild felines are strong swimmers, the tiger and jaguar especially crossing rivers without hesitation. We may include some of the great members of the feline tribe amongst those which have been made use of by man, even if hardly as auxiliaries of the sportsman. Their use in the arena in ancient times scarcely comes under this heading; in far more modern times they have been employed by Eastern potentates to mete out due punishment to objectionable persons. From very ancient times they were made use of by great conquerors to add lustre to their triumphant

know from personal experience that the Marten makes a delightful pet and may be given a good deal of liberty, I think it more likely to have been the Genet, an animal far more closely allied to the cat tribe than is the Marten, and which, moreover, undoubtedly is occasionally (or at any rate *was*, ere the accursed and heathenish lust for furs decimated the most beautiful fauna of the world) kept as a house pet in Southern Europe. Apart from these, there appear to have been but three instances in which the cat tribe have been regularly used as free agents in helping man in his hunting. Of these the case of the Egyptian cat is well known; that of the Chita (cheetah) or hunting-leopard of India is another familiar instance and genuine case of a feline as a free auxiliary, for though hooded until within view of the game, he is then perfectly his own master. The use of the Chita is exactly on a parallel with that of the hawk in falconry.

The lynx, that curious short-tailed, tufted eared feline, about whose wondrous powers of sight there



*Non Leporis Cambus tantum, sed quoque Parus
Sectari timides Turcis magnatibus est inna.*

*Venatoris Equi graxelox Bestia tergo
Infidet: hinc felinus conspicuum fertur in hostem.*

marches, sometimes actually drawing cars, sometimes being led in the procession. For instance, we learn that there was a display of twelve lion-drawn chariots (as well as five drawn by buffaloes and seven by ostriches) in the procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria. Lions were the most usually employed of the great felines, but there were also others which were described as *pardi*, *pantheræ*, and *varii*—probably leopards, cheetahs, lynxes, and perhaps hyænas. Both leopard and lynx, in mythology, are depicted as harnessed to the car of Bacchus.

In all these instances the felines were under some form of restraint and had not the option of taking French leave "when so disposed" or of carrying out their owner's wishes. Old Greek writers mention a domestic animal as *ailuron*, under which title some have thought to find the cat. Professor Rolleston thinks this animal, which must have had entire liberty of action, may have been the Marten, but, though I

used to be so many fables told, appears to have been quite frequently employed. Lynxes can sometimes be made very tame, especially the small American lynx known as "bobcat." In the time of the Moguls leopards and lynxes are stated to have been customarily kept for chasing deer, and tigers for attacking boars. On this subject Jardine remarks:—Although it is not likely that it was the real tiger which was thus employed, it is quite obvious that there were at least three animals which were so distinct as to entitle them to various denominations."

The Caracal, a species of lynx, noticeable for its extremely tufted ears (a Turkish name for it is Mother of Tassels) and relatively longer tail—has in quite recent times (and possibly still is) been used by Eastern sportsmen for taking large birds, gazelles, etc., also for purposes of gambling. The agility of these slenderly-built and very queer tempered cats is almost unbelievable. Sportsmen wishing to bet upon their

Caracals would scatter grain in front of a flock of pigeons. When the birds were busily feeding, at a given signal the two Caracals would be let loose, and the cat which struck down most birds would win the bet. A Caracal has been known to strike down a dozen birds ere they could rise out of range; no mean feat of agility, as those who have ever witnessed the quick rising of a flock of frightened pigeons will certainly admit.

Stradanus, who has been called the sixteenth century Landseer, in a rare and quaint old work entitled "Venationes Ferarum, Avium, Piscium, Pugnae Bestiarum et mutuae Bestiarum" (Hunting of Wild Beasts, Birds, and Fish, and Battles with Wild-beast Fighters, and of Wild Beasts) gave a quaint print in which spotted cats are shown assisting with dogs in the chase of hares. The sportsmen are described as Turkish grandees (which may mean any kind of Orientals) in the accompanying letterpress. The beautifully spotted cats, represented as larger than ordinary cats, whilst of less size than the Chita, apparently sat upon a flat saddle behind the horsemen, and darted upon the game when roused by the dogs.

Block by courtesy of "The Bazaar."

The Animal Lover's League—Report of Meeting.

AN enthusiastic meeting of this League was held on January 12th, at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand. The organiser and secretary, after explaining that as yet little had been done owing to her having been laid up for several months as the result of an accident, presented a statement of the accounts, showing a balance of nearly £60 in hand. Certain accounts were ordered to be paid. A discussion ensued as to the work of the League and it was unanimously decided that its principal work should be the provision of lethal boxes for dogs and cats in districts where they are badly needed, but that the educational side of the matter should not be neglected and that every possible means should be taken to instruct the public as to the cruelty of rearing unwanted puppies and kittens. It was reported that two lethal boxes had been already applied for by members, also that our good friends, Mr. A. Percival, of Percival's Hotel, Worthing, Miss Hill-Shaw (Croydon), and Mrs. Blackie, of Edinburgh, have boxes which they are willing to lend to local persons wishing to use them. The following were appointed officers of the League with power to add to their number: Chairman (*pro tem*) Mr. H. C. Brooke; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. Herbert Garland; Hon. Sec. (*pro tem*): Mrs. Sheridan Jones; Committee: Miss F. Brathwaite, Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, Mrs. Ellaby, Miss Winifred French, Miss Hill-Shaw, Miss Helen Hill-Shaw, Miss Sladen, Miss Violet Wood. The Annual Subscription was fixed at 5s., but donations will be gratefully accepted.

The Secretary was instructed to take the necessary steps to form the Council and issue an appeal for funds for this much-needed reform.

BOOKS REVIEWED

WE have received several enquiries from our novice readers, many of whom have seen no publication dealing with Cats but CAT GOSSIP, as to an inexpensive work which will give them an insight into the necessary knowledge required by a beginner in this fancy. To these we recommend the purchase of the late Miss Frances Simpson's book, *Cats for Pleasure and Profit*. The 1924 edition of this practical little work, is profusely illustrated with portraits of typical cats of most varieties, and contains a mine of information as to points, shows, diseases, cat clubs; in fact, the cat lore accumulated through many years by the "Fairy Godmother of the Cat Fancy," is there placed at the disposal of the student. The book is to be obtained from the offices of our contemporary, *Fur & Feather*, Idle, Bradford, Yorks.

THE Animal Lovers League

How Shall the Unwanted Animal Die?

BY
SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

EVERY day there are born into the world hundreds of tiny cats and dogs. What happens to them? Some are drowned at birth; others are retained through their attractive youth and then, when the youthful charm has departed, are thrust into the street to starve to death or to be killed by stones or kicks.

It is a cruel declension, from a warm fireside to a stony pavement. How often has each one of us been followed by a poor, despairing animal whose pitiful condition appeals for help? Most of us hurry on and try to lose the creature in a maze of traffic. Others take it home and give it shelter for the night. What then?

Next morning the more humane take the stray to the nearest chemist where it is given poison—poison that by its very nature may give poignant torture to the little victim. But all strays are not so easily delivered. Famished, emaciated, hunted, they prow about the gutters, their very tenacity of life lengthening their torment, until at last they form the quarry for a group of school boys whose careless stones may give them oblivion.

Cases have been recorded in the press where stray dogs have been bludgeoned to death at the local police station by the particular officer authorised by the Government to deal with them. Only recently a stray dog was thus despatched—an unwanted animal which might have been drowned at birth or later on destroyed by humane means.

For, and this is the point, there *is* a humane method of despatching cats and dogs, and it is for this purpose that the Animal Lovers' League has been formed.

Its principal work will be to arrange for the provision of lethal boxes in the myriad places where none now exist, and to see that these boxes are placed in the charge of competent persons who will ensure that all animals brought be painlessly destroyed. Full instructions will be attached to every box. **THE BOXES WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE LEAGUE AND THEIR UPKEEP INCLUDING THE ANÆSTHETICS PAID FOR.** They will be supplied to competent and responsible persons who will undertake to make use of them.

Further, the League will not neglect the educational side, but will endeavour to make clear to the public how very wrong it is to rear unwanted kittens and puppies.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the League wishes in no way to work counter to existing institutions. Wherever such a body is carrying out work on these lines the League will not interfere.

These aims must commend themselves to every humane man or woman. But the work cannot be accomplished without funds, and I would appeal to all who, like myself, have an affection for animals, for a subscription. It is not only money, however, that is wanted. The A.L.L. is in need of volunteers who will actively interest themselves in promoting the interests of the League on behalf of the stray. **WILL YOU COME IN AND HELP?**

Is the Siamese the Sacred Egyptian Cat?

M. Armand Steens Sticks to his Guns.

I WAS pleased to read the editor's arguments against my hypothesis, for the more light thrown on the subject the better. I cannot, however, consider his arguments as decisive, they being based upon two points: firstly his admitted ignorance of the French Egyptologist Maspero's statement that the Egyptian cat is of Indian origin, and the statement that paintings show this cat to have been striped and ring-tailed. Georges Maspero has for 25 years been the leading French Egyptologist. He was sent to Cairo in 1880 to found the School of Egyptology. In 1881 he was appointed Director of the Boulaq Museum and discovered 36 sarcophagi. He opened twenty pyramids and excavated the Temple of Luxor. Returned to France he became Professor of Egyptology at the College de France till 1889, when he returned to Egypt and studied the pyramids of Memphis and the clearing of the Temple of Karnak. I am a great admirer of his work and when he states that the Egyptian Cat is of Indian origin I must have something more than a mere negation to be convinced that he is wrong. In the Dictionary Larousse it is stated that the Egyptian Cats were of two kinds—the "gloved" cat and the Indian cat. At the end of the dictionary it is stated that all items referring to Old Egypt are given by Maspero. The "gloved" cat is the wild cat, *felis maniculata*, a large and strong animal, father of our Egyptian wild cats, and the fine, slender animals which the Egyptians depicted certainly belong to the Indian category.

As regards the second point, it is true that in some designs on papyrus, and also on those I described showing the cat conducting some young geese, one can see stripes and tail rings. But this does not prove that the original Siamese had no markings. One of my Siamese is darkening and it is not getting a uniform dark fur but shows brown stripes. On the other hand, Mrs. Duncan Hindley's kitten Prestwick Periwinkle, shows distinct rings on the tail. These rings may disappear later on and, if I state the fact, it is simply to prove that some Siamese are striped and ring-tailed. Certainly, the perfect Siamese should be of even colour, but this is because Siamese breeders have evidently selected their cats with a view to getting the lightest possible specimens. But if, even now, after centuries of breeding, these stripes and tail rings yet occasionally re-appear it simply proves that some time in the past many Siamese cats had these characteristics.

I note that the Editor attaches little importance to the Egyptian statuettes, they being conventional, but he must not forget that such a conventional type must have been inspired by a living model whose characteristics the artists would exaggerate. If, for instance, on the stele at the Gizah Museum, which represents the Goddess Mout with Ammons Goose, they have adorned the former with long ears, long paws, a long tail and slender silhouette—if on the bronze head of a cat discovered at Bubastis the sculptor gave the animal a flat nose, we may well assume the original animals were likewise. As regards the statuette of the Goddess Bast, that proves little, for I could show you another statuette of Bast with small flat ears, and a head more like that of a lion than of a cat. One must not forget that the worship of Bast is so very ancient that the first primitive artists of Bubastis endeavoured to reproduce that divinity when their

art was yet a very imperfect one, which accounts for the different presentments of the goddess which we observe.

To conclude I would like to quote from Mr. Platt's book *Things you do not Know about Cats*, page 14, re Cat mummies:—

"For our little cat friends a bath of bitumen was the usual method, the dead animal being plunged in bodily. Undoubtedly this would affect the colour of the fur and in the only unwrapped specimen at the British Museum the coat is of deep orange. It is somewhat difficult, therefore, to say off-hand if this is the natural colour of the Egyptian cat, or whether the colour is due to the use of bitumen which would undoubtedly stain orange. We may perhaps assume that the bath would be a weak one, not powerful enough to absolutely dye or disguise the original shade of the fur. The natural colour of the cat tribe is a tawny one. There are no signs of marks or bars on this British Museum specimen which, probably, was a shaded but not tabby sable."

Is it then not the royal Siamese himself who, after sixty centuries sleep in an Egyptian hypogeum appears as a witness on my side, dressed in his shaded (but not tabby) tawny, sunny or sable coat?

* * * * *

Note by Editor.

As regards M. Steen's remarks as to the stripes or ringed tails occurring in the Siamese cat, I quite and absolutely agree with him. I never maintained the contrary, what I did say was, that if the Siamese cat, as known to us to-day, had appeared, be it ever so seldom, in ancient Egypt, the artists of those days would certainly have left some record of such a striking colour scheme.

As regards the various types of head shown by figures of the goddess Bast, Pasht, or Bastit, M. Steens is again perfectly correct. I merely gave the picture of the little statuette, as a matter of topical interest, and not as illustrative of type.

I cannot, however, agree with the remarks quoted above as to the cats themselves. I see no reason for assuming that the Egyptian Cat, Fettered Cat, Gloved Cat, Kaffir Cat, etc.—*chat gante, felis maniculata, felis cafra, felis ocreata*—was an ancestor of the European (and British) wild Cat. Fossilised remains of the latter are found in very ancient British deposits, showing it to have existed at a very early period. M. Steens refers to *f. maniculata* as a large cat. But as a matter of fact, specimens of this cat vary very greatly in size. Some are large, others only the size of a small domestic cat of slender build; yet all belong to the same species. Again, as regards colour, whilst Egyptian paintings never show Siamese coloration, they do show stripes, rather indistinct spots (also found in *f. cafra* to-day) and a warm brown self colour. This, however, does not appear to be the Siamese coloration, but absolutely that of the Abyssinian cat. Some of these may certainly be poetically described as warm and sun-kissed in tint. At the Natural History Museum is a specimen of a small wild cat from the Sudan, red-tawny, and practically unmarked, greatly reminding one of Sir Claud Alexander's champion Abyssinian Red Rust. These small, slenderly built cats, known to us as Abyssinians, exist in Africa to-day, and evidently did so exist in ancient Egypt; their type is not that of the Siamese, yet in build and coloration they quite meet the descriptions of the self, or shaded, yet not tabby cats of sunny or tawny coat.

Probably M. Steens is not familiar with this Abyssinian or Nubian Cat?

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