

# The Domestic Cat in Ancient Europe.

CAT GOSSIP, March 9th, 1927

## CAT · GOSSIP

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Edited by H. C. BROOKE

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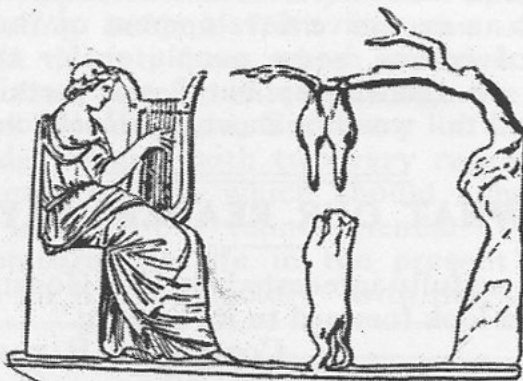


Fig. 816. Dressage d'un chat

Fig 1.—Cat dancing to the Lyre.

### EPITAPH ON JUSTIN'S CAT.

Worn out with age and dire disease, a Cat  
Friendly to all, save wicked Mouse and Rat,  
I'm sent at last to ford the Stygian lake  
And to the infernal coast a voyage make:  
Me Proserpine received, and smiling said,  
"Be blest, within the mansions of the dead!  
Enjoy, among thy velvet-footed loves  
Elysium's sunny banks and shady groves!"  
"But if I've well deserved, O gracious Queen,  
If patient under suffering I have been,  
Grant me at least one night to visit home  
again:  
Once more to see my home and mistress  
dear,  
And purr these grateful accents in her ear:  
Thy faithful Cat, thy poor departed slave,  
Still loves her Mistress, e'en beyond the  
grave!"

### NEXT WEEK :

COMPTON MACKENZIE  
CHATS ON  
SIAMESE CATS.

### GOSSIP OF THE WEEK

MISS L'ESTRANGE WALSH writes: "I was very pleased that a young male, only ten months old, by Ch. Minley Surprise ex Ch. Minley Venus, won a championship at Paris. He only arrived there the day before the Show, and the purchaser is delighted with him. He was one of my own breeding. I am entirely in favour of a Cat Paper of our own, and should have thought all lovers of cats would be in favour of it!"

MR. OWEN GOULD has sent in his name as the twenty-first Guarantor.

THE ATTENTION of those exporting Cats is drawn to the advertisement of that old-established firm of export agents, Van Oppen. With headquarters in London, this firm has branches at many towns on the Continent. We have availed ourselves of their services in the transport of several kinds of live stock, and with perfectly satisfactory results. They are now desirous of making a speciality of feline consignments.

No DOUBT many of my readers have spent happy leisure hours with the works of Compton Mackenzie? I am delighted to be able to announce a highly interesting article on Siamese from the pen of this gifted author, which will appear in our issue of March 16th. This kind friend has also announced that he will become the twenty-second Guarantor to further the interests of *Cat Gossip*. (Whilst on this subject I must not forget to mention the invaluable work put in by Mrs. Veley on our behalf!) whilst M. Steens, of Antwerp, as a twenty-third, is determined that gallant little Belgium shall be represented! I thank you all, kind friends, most sincerely.

I AM sorry to hear there seems to be some dissension in the French cat world, and there is talk of a new Club being formed in opposition to Dr. Jumaud's Club. What a pity if in this infant fancy there is already ill-feeling!

M. STEEN'S Siamese, Ami of Dulverton, the brother to Pumalet, whose death in Canada we recently chronicled, has had the misfortune to be burnt on the back by a red-hot cinder, and it is feared a permanent scar may result.

MISS MORANT has purchased from Mrs. Neate the winning L.H. Tortoiseshell, Special Blend. This daughter of Hampstead Red Sand and True Type is best known as the dam of Mrs. Tomlinson's winning Tortie Lady Maythorpe, and that grand kitten, Red Seal, which Mrs. Yeates had the ill-luck to lose from show fever after its successful *début* in 1926. Before leaving Newdigate, Special Blend was mated to Ch. Red Leader. Two RED self female Kits by Shazada have gone to Mrs. Lichfield, of West Drayton, and Mrs. Wallace Dunlop, of Peaslake, Surrey.

FRESH STUDS enter our columns this week in the persons of Miss Cotterell's brace of L.H., and Mrs. Harvey's Siamese.

DOES any reader know of a copy of *Domestic and Fancy Cats* (John Jennings)?

MISS LANGHORNE'S cream stud, Ch. Shere Khan, was badly scratched in the eye by a visiting queen. The eye got worse and worse, the lid turning in so that the fur was against the eyeball. However, an operation was performed by a leading London practitioner, and the Khan is quite himself again.

WE have received from Mrs. Kate E. Stacey, of Chicago, a copy of her charming little book, *Just Cats*, lately published, from which we shall take the liberty to "crib" the delightful legend of the Tortie-and-White Cat's origin. Mrs. Stacey—who, by the way, is an Englishwoman—says, referring to white cats: "I have found the deaf cat more intelligent than those of sound hearing. They soon learn to recognise voices and footsteps by sound vibrations. A movement that is seen and not heard does not frighten a cat; but it stimulates her inquisitive nature and arouses her interest in things about her. So one soon learns to train deaf cats to understand sign language, and to come at the tapping of a foot and so forth."

THE American system of Championship awards, as described in *Just Cats*, is this:—To become a champion a cat must win ten points in the same class. This method of awarding points is used by clubs in C.F.A.: The best cat receives one point in a show where forty cats are exhibited, two points where sixty, three where eighty, and four where there are one hundred cats. At all sanctioned shows the best male and the best

female shall receive one additional point, providing it is at least a two-point show. The A.C.A. (American Cat Association) award one point where fifty or seventy-five cats are exhibited, and so on proportionately up to four points for more than one hundred and forty exhibits.

MRS. VELEY writes:—"It is quite incorrect for foreign critics to write as if short tails (in Siamese) and kinked tails were synonymous. Forty years ago, at any rate, tails were *long* and had a slight kink about two inches from the tip, and this as much in the Palace as elsewhere. The shortness is only due to an excessive development of the kink, and, of course, some people prefer this, in Siam as elsewhere; but I am certain the original tail was not short, but *both long and kinked*."

### WHAT OUR READERS SAY.

"I AM awfully interested in CAT GOSSIP, and always look forward to its coming."

CONSTANCE BATEMAN.

"I shall always be glad to have your paper."

LILIAN M. JEFFRIES.

"Its such a dear little paper!"

E. B. GOULD.

"I do hope your big effort to provide a Cat paper will be a success. Am sure the need of it must be obvious to all."

JOAN THOMPSON.

### VISITS.

January 17th.—Miss Joan Thompson's **Juno of Pensford** to Lady Eardley Wilmot's **Dazzler of Henley**.

THE ancients identified Bubastis with the Greek Artemis (or Diana), and each was regarded as the goddess of the moon. Bubastis (Bast, Pasht, Bastit, &c., Ed.), was generally represented as a woman with a cat's head. (See "CAT GOSSIP," No. 5). It might occur to some that "Puss" is derived from the Egyptian name Posht; but perhaps it is better to acquiesce in the derivation from the Latin *Pusus* (a little boy) or *Pusa* (a little girl).—*The Book of Cats*, 1867.

DR. TURTON observed a century ago:—The cat has a more voluminous and expressive vocabulary than any other animal. The short twitter of complacency and affection, the purr of tranquility and pleasure, the mew of distress, the growl of anger, and the horrible wailing of pain.



## THE CAT IN EUROPE TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO.

BY THE EDITOR.

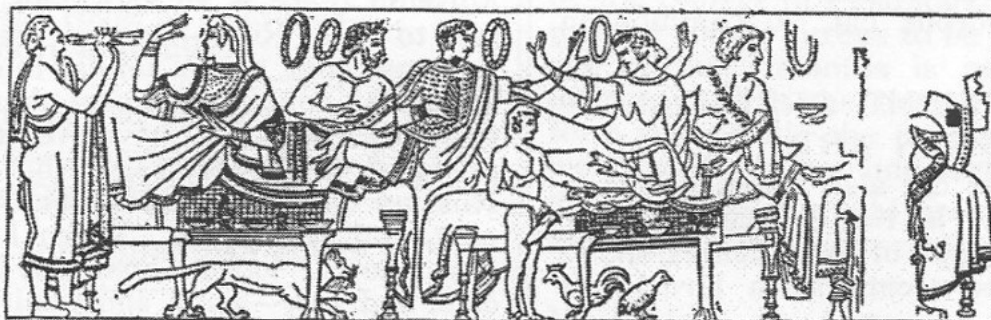
ALTHOUGH SO MUCH is related of the Cat in Old Egypt, very little seems to be known of its status or even of its existence as a domestic animal in the period of the ancient splendour of Greece and Rome. In a recent issue of our French contemporary *Les Tablettes des Eleveurs*, the organ of the French Cat fancy, appeared a masterly article upon this fascinating subject from the pen of Dr. Vincent Niclot, from which we give some particulars, supplemented, through the courtesy of Dr. Jumaud, Secretary of the Cat Club de France, with two very rare representations of cats which should appeal to every lover of our feline friends. "When we compare the life in the present day," writes the learned doctor, "with that in past

Pliny (about 70 A.D.) admired its eyes—"gleaming like emeralds in the darkness."

### WEIRD MEDICAL PRESCRIPTIONS.

Ancient medical practice, which embraced in its pharmacopœia almost every object under the sun, did not disdain the cat. Vulture's brains and boiled cat's heart formed the prescription for some diseases; certain intimate ulcerations were treated by an application of almond oil, mixed with one part of opium to two of feline excrement! This very unsavoury ingredient, with an equal proportion of mustard, was used as a cure for baldness. The ashes of stoat or cat were thought to drive away rats: but the cat was supposed to be irresistibly attracted to persons who had been bitten by a crocodile. (Perhaps judges who have suffered from cat bites would like to try the experiment of going to the Zoo and letting quite a small crocodile bite them, in the hope of gaining further immunity from cat bites?).

BANQUET  
SCENE  
WITH  
CAT.



FROM  
ANCIENT  
ROMAN  
TOMB.

Fig. 641. Chat, coq, perdrix dans une salle de festin.

Fig 2.

ages, we feel surprised at the very mediocre position accorded to that most amiable companion the Cat!" The ancients, men of public life, devoted themselves but little in their writings to descriptions of the discreet attractions of the women's quarters. The dog, noisy and turbulent, the friend and auxiliary of man, is constantly referred to—the cat but rarely and with reserve.

### WEASEL? OR CAT?

It has even been maintained, by some authorities, that the stoat (fr. belette) was entrusted with the war against the house-rodents, and that our cat, domesticated only in Egypt, first made its appearance in the Middle Ages upon European hearths.

It is undoubtedly the cat which was described by Aristotle some centuries B.C.: its habits, its method of mating, the calls of the female, its custom of burying its droppings, being all described with fidelity. Later, the naturalist

### FABLED CUNNING OF THE CAT.

As in ancient Egyptian fables (see "CAT GOSSIP" No. 4), the cat was credited with a cunning which enabled him to play the confidence trick upon his intended victims; so in early European fable he appears as a trickster, reaping his advantage from the gullibility of other creatures. As a doctor, he attends, for his own sinister purposes, the ailing hen. He holds with the cock, before devouring him, a conversation paralleled in later generations by the fable of the Wolf and the Lamb. He suspends himself as if dead, from a nail, but whilst failing by this ruse to impose upon the old and experienced cock and rat, he succeeds in duping the eagle and the wild pig.

### ALAS! POOR PARTRIDGE!

In mythology, we find it related that one Eresichton, having hewn down, in Demeter's sacred wood, a poplar, or as Ovid has it an

oak, beneath the shade of which the nymphs were wont to dance at midday, was punished by being afflicted with a disease compelling him to devour everything, "even to the house cat, the terror of small vermin," yet gradually starving to death. The sad end of Agathias' pet partridge was commemorated in three epigrams, one of which runs:—  
 "Detestable cat, rival of murderous dogs, thou art like unto the hounds of Actæon! Destroying the partridge of thy master, Agathias, thou destroyest the master himself! And thou, thou thinkest now only on partridges! and the mice dance for joy, regaling themselves on the succulent pie thou disdainest!"

#### WISE OLD SAWS.

Ancient proverbs, too, mention the cat. "No workman can build a door which shall be proof against the cat or the lover." "When the cat prowls watch over and hide the dishes!" "Let us give the meat to our lovers and say the cat stole it!"  
 This last evidently a foreshadowing of the landlady's omnivorous cat, so common in seaside lodgings!

#### PUSS IN ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN ART.

In antique art the cat also found its place. An amphora now in the British Museum, depicting the Triumph of Triptolemus, shows in the background a cat with a bird in its mouth.

A fragment of fresco, in the Museum of Cnossus (Crete), shows a cat preparing to spring on a bird. "Only the head and one forepaw are to be seen: but the head is singularly expressive, and the articulation of the shoulder marvellously correct."

A tomb-painting represents a banquet (Fig. 2): Under the table, in company with a cock and a partridge, we observe a very obvious cat, whiskers and all complete.

A Gallic-Roman memorial, placed over the tomb of a young girl, is surmounted by the figures of a cat and a cock side by side; another Cretan fresco depicts a cat ready to pounce upon birds: on a vase is seen a cat with serpents, and a second cat running off with a wren in its mouth; but probably the most interesting of all is the bas-relief in the Museum of the Capitol at Rome (Fig. 1): which presents to us the figure of a cat being taught to dance to the notes of a lyre played by a woman. Obviously the birds are suspended from the branch above to encourage puss to rise upon his hind legs.

\* NOTE I.—The stoat seems a most unlikely animal to have been habitually kept as a house pet and vermin destroyer. Some authorities have, with more probability, suggested the marten. But if we *must* look for a substitute for the cat, we shall find the most probable one in the genet. (ED.).

NOTE II.—Plutarch, the Greek author who flourished about 100 A.D., said that the cat was the symbol of the moon, on account of her different colours, her busy ways at night, and her giving birth to twenty-eight young ones during the course of her life, being the number of the phases of the moon. (ED.).

#### CAT CALLS.

##### THE EDITOR, CAT GOSSIP.

I am glad to see that CAT GOSSIP is to go on, and I hope you will soon tell us something about the Russian cat. That animal is a puzzle to me. In the Natural History Museum there is an enormous cat which is said to be a "Russo-Persian" cat. It has an immense coat, and is similar in every way to a Persian long-hair, except that it is larger than any specimen I have ever seen. An old uncle of mine possessed what *he* called a Russian cat, also a long-hair with immense coat, and very large. When I went to my first show I looked anxiously for Russian cats, and saw—small short-hairs, blue, long of nose like a Siamese, and altogether more that shape! Do blue Russians really come from Russia, and, if so, then where do those immense long-hairs come from, and why were they called Russian, even by Museum authorities? I should be most glad of any information you can give on the subject.

Wishing the paper the best of luck,

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) AMY L. LAWRENCE.

Tatsfield.

N.B.—*Apropos* my uncle's huge "Russian" cat, which was, by the way, a tabby, here is a little cat anecdote. The cat went out into the garden one day, and found a destroyed nest of thrushes, the young ones scattered about the ground and mostly dead—one partly eaten by some marauding cat. One was, however, uninjured, and the cat picked up this one, carried it very carefully to the cook and "handed" it to her as a present. She fed it, and kept it in a cage for some time until it was able to fly, and the cat would always watch it with a most benevolent ex-



pression, as much as to say, "You're my protégé!"

## HOLIDAY HOME FOR SIAMESE CATS.

THE EDITOR CAT GOSSIP,

I am very glad to see in your issue of 23rd February, a letter from Mrs. French about her Holiday Home for Siamese Cats. This is a great want and I sincerely hope it will mature. Last year I had three enquiries for such a home for Siamese, while their owners were away. There are several kind ladies who take cat boarders, but they are usually of several varieties, and there are some people who would prefer to send Siamese to only a Siamese home. I shall have much pleasure in helping forward this scheme, and in recommending Mrs. French, who is a genuine lover of our particular breed, and I am quite sure that any Siamese sent to her will have every care and her personal attention. I shall be pleased to answer any inquiries, and my name may be added to Mrs. Veley and Miss Crosse as reference.

Yours faithfully,

E. C. BUSTEED.

Hon. Sec. Siamese Cat Club.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

By MARION SHERIDAN-JONES.

### A PERFECT LADY.

In the kennels the talk turns on the charms of one Rennie, a sedate, matronly bitch. Alas for the hopes of the remainder, a stranger is introduced, a dark gentleman, who is shut up with the lady of their desires, and when she re-emerges, they have got over their adoration and see only a rather dingy, foolish matron in whom they could not possibly be interested. The dogs are a happy little family, and G. B. Stern writes of them with her usual insight into canine character.

### AN OBSERVANT DOG.

China is in the minds of most of us to-day, and the publication of this amusing book is highly appropriate. The little Yo Fei takes good stock of his surroundings, and presents a picture of present day China that is very illuminating. He, with his "missuss," are keenly interested in modern China, and their pictures of customs and daily life in the Celestial City are well worth studying. Yo Fei does not forget that at one time the cat

occupied the important position that the dog holds to-day, and he gives for our delectation the following little verse from "Scribner's" entitled "Pedigree":—

"Bred in expensive catteries,  
The finest to be had,  
Were *Ginger's* hand picked ancestors;  
My Kitty says he's glad  
That *his* folk were romanticists:  
*His* mother loved his dad."

The volume is beautifully illustrated.

"*The Dark Gentleman*," by G. B. STERN.  
(Chapman and Hall, 6s. net.)

"*The Autobiography of a Chinese Dog*," by  
FLORENCE AYS COUGH.  
(Jonathan Cape, 6s. net.)

*The Daily Express* says: "Cats will have a higher status than dogs if a Bill which is being drafted for presentation to Parliament by the College of Pestology, making it compulsory for all kittens to be registered at the age of three months is passed, for a dog licence entitles the owner to keep any dog for a year, while the proposed cat's licence would only apply to one particular cat."

This Bill, which would prove an intolerable burden, must be opposed by every cat owner.

MISS HILL-SHAW has had more ill-luck! Her beautiful young Manx, Kelpie, died a week after his illustrious sire.

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## SELF RED PERSIANS.

BY MRS. NEATE.

THIRTY years have passed since I owned my first pedigree Persian Cat! When visiting Boscombe Show in 1897 I succumbed to the charms of the winning orange in a class of 26 kittens, and by the advice of the late Mr. T. B. Mason, who had judged the class, I purchased my afterwards well-known "King's Own." This cat had a very successful show career, and was considered as self-coloured an orange as was at that period to be seen in the show-pen. Although great strides have been made since those days in the improvement of colour in Oranges—or Reds as we know them now—it cannot be said that much success has attended the breeding of Self-Reds, and no *certain* method of producing a really self-coloured red cat has been evolved.

I have always advocated the mating of Creams with Oranges as the surest way to obtain good specimens of each colour; and when "King's Own" was mated to a cream female bred from the famous Ronaldkirk creams, he sired the rich-coloured unmarked orange queen, "Mehitabel of the Durhams"; this cat had sound lips and chin, which in those early days of showing were not often seen, and she proved a grand breeder of Oranges. Her owner, Mrs. D'Arcy Hildyard—my life-long friend—once showed her with a litter, of eight deep orange kittens, of both sexes—the females being somewhat rare in those days: and in subsequent litters it was the Orange blood which predominated.

Coming to more recent years, the late Champion Ruddiman—a truly magnificent red self, the property of that best of red judges, Mr. Western—is the stud that has done most to improve the Red-self variety, and the few breeders who are fortunate enough to own queens of this strain should make the utmost use of such valuable material, and mate them to the best Red-self male of the same line of breeding. I am a firm believer in pedigree, and before mating up a queen I carefully study the individuals figuring in her pedigree and all that is known of their show careers. I then select a line-bred male most suited to her in points. The many failures one sees in Red-self breeding are due to the haphazard system of mating queens to any stud that takes one's fancy because he happens to be near, or, yet worse, because his services are available at a low fee.

## THE BEST ARE GOOD ENOUGH!

**Breed from the Best** is a safe rule to adhere to, and the extra half-sovereign or so spent on a really well thought-out mating may make all the difference between success or failure later on when your kittens are ready to face their judges, and prove themselves a financial gain or loss. There are always eager buyers for the best of any variety. The more especially does this apply to Self Reds, and the fancier who can breed a brilliant Red Persian, quite free from marks or shadings, with eyes that match the coat, will have achieved a triumph for which many are striving with but a small modicum of success.

Hats off! to the Breeder of Champions!

To *own* the best of any variety—as I think I may say I do with Shazada!—is quite a different thing from having *bred* one, so I am still striving to produce the *perfect* Red-self, with an enthusiasm just as keen as in those far-off days of 1897!

"In the shop of Mr. Handforth, Borough Road, Southwark, I saw in 1835 a white cat whose left eye was of a light green colour, while her right was of a beautiful light blue. It would seem that sometimes, if not always, this disparity arises from disease or injury. Dr. Smith mentions a soldier, whose eyes differed in colour, one iris being grey, the other light green, and the man ascribed the circumstance to a severe blow . . . inflicted several months previously on the light green eye, which was originally grey."

FENNELL: *Natural History of Quadrupeds.*

[Fancy mice are sometimes found with one red and one black eye.—Note by Ed.]

It is stated in a Japanese book that the tip of a cat's nose is always cold, except on the day corresponding with our Midsummer Day.

## NATIONAL CAT CLUB.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30TH, at the Grosvenor Hotel, S.W., at 2 p.m.

Official Notice and Balance Sheet will be posted to Members in due course.

CYRIL YEATES, Hon. Sec.



## THE LEGEND OF THE TORTIE AND WHITE.

AGES and ages ago, when the world was very young, four men from the great four races of men sat in an Indian wigwam. It was bitterly cold, the wild wind blew, and the snow and sleet beat upon the roof of the wigwam. But within it was very still, for no man could speak a word his brother could understand.

And the Red Man and the Black Man and the Yellow Man and the White Man sat on the thick fur of the buffalo smoking and dreaming their dreams. And as they sat smoking and dreaming the slave of the chieftain crept close, and in her hand was a new-born kitten without a hair on its cold pink body. And she gave it to her master, crying, "O mighty chieftain, the wild cat which lives in the mountains hath left this kit outside the wigwam, where it was perishing with cold. Oh! my lord, can'st thou cover it with the soft skin of the mole, and I will give it warm milk, and it shall live."

And the Red Man took the little naked kitten and held it in both hands, and made a solemn incantation, and kissed it on its bare head. And lo! it was covered with beautiful red hair, and his face was stern, but in his eyes was the red light of triumph as he handed the kitten to the Black Man.

And the Black Man made a singing incantation, and he kissed the kitten on each shoulder, and behold! there were two large splashes of black, for his lips were very thick. And he laughed and showed his strong white teeth as he gave the kitten to the man who came from China.

And the Yellow Man made his incantation in strange murmurings, and kissed and kissed the kit, and wherever his lips touched there were patches like sunshine, and he sang a song as he handed the kitten to the White Man, who wore the garb of a priest.

And the White Man said, "I cannot make an incantation, neither can I kiss the kit, but I can pray to Him Who loveth all things, great and small," and as he prayed and laid on his hands lo! the kitten was all white—save where it had been kissed by the Red Man and the Black Man and the Yellow Man.

*From "Cat Tales and Kitten Tales"  
and "Just Cats."*

"A MAY kitten makes a dirty cat," is a piece of old Huntingdonshire folk-lore.

## Advertising Rates and Subscriptions.

CAT GOSSIP is only obtainable, as yet, through the post. Price 3d. per copy, post free. Three months, 3/6. Six months 6/6. Cash with order.

**ADVERTISEMENTS.** Displayed Adverts., Stud or others, 3/6 per inch, each, up to 4 insertions; 4 to 13 insertions 3/4 inch; 13 and upwards 2/9 inch. Standing Advs. of Cat Clubs, 35 words, 2/6. Sales, Wants, &c., 1d. per word, minimum 1/6.

**PORTRAITS.** Cats standing at Stud (not less than 5 insertions) can have their portraits published for the price of block and postage. Block becomes property of owner. Portrait may be repeated within the year for inclusive fee of **One Guinea**. For Cats not advertised at Stud the Portrait Fee with Block will be 21/-.

All Correspondence to be sent to the Editor, H. C. BROOKE, BISHOP'S HULL, TAUNTON. Assist. Editor, London Agency and Book Reviews: M. Sheridan-Jones, 11, Tunley Road, London, S.W. 17.

### SIAMESE AT STUD

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## SIAMESE AT STUD.

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