

# A Menace to the Cat World!

CAT GOSSIP, March 23rd, 1927

## CAT • GOSSIP

VOL. 1

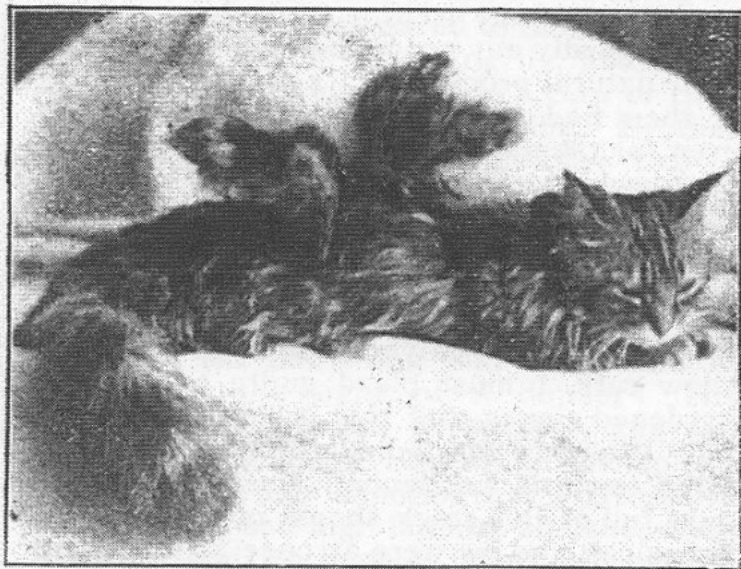
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Edited by H. C. BROOKE

No 16

MARCH 23rd, 1927

Price 3d., post free



AN EXTRAORDINARY FREAK.

Block by courtesy of "Animals."

## Gossip of the Week.

ABNORMALITIES, or "freaks," in the cat seem to be most common in the foot and tail. Whether the caudal abnormalities of some breeds are derived in the first place from a freak is a matter about which we shall probably never arrive at any certainty. The presence of extra toes on some, or all, paws, even sometimes to the extent of a complete second paw growing out on the inside of the leg just above the normal one, is not of extreme rarity; in fact, within the last two years two such specimens have been seen at shows—one a L.H., the other a Manx. In the case of the L.H. at least, this polydactylism is an inherited feature of frequent occurrence in a certain strain; as has been the case in certain polydactyle human beings. The remarkable freak depicted above, however, was of a different nature. This cat had growing from its back two appendages which reminded the observer irresistibly of the wings of a chicken before the adult feathers

appear. These appendages were not flabby but apparently gristly, about six or eight inches long, and placed in exactly the position assumed by the wings of a bird in the act of taking flight. They did not make their appearance until the kitten was several weeks old. Alas! one of those brutes in human shape who, encouraged by callous or knock-kneed magistrates, still are too plentiful, cut off the "wings" with fatal results to the cat!

MISS LEATHERDALE, who recently saved the life of a baby Siamese kitten, whom the mother had overlaid and pushed away as "dead and done with," gives the following humorous description of her successful procedure:—

### STEAMED KITTEN.

#### MATERIALS.

One new-born kitten, apparently dead, one small piece of blanket, a little boiled milk and water, a colander, a saucepan half-full of hot water.

Place the saucepan over a lighted gas or oil-stove burner, set the colander over the saucepan, put the kitten on the piece of flannel in the colander. Gently wash the kitten's face and, if necessary, the whole kitten with warm milk and water. Do not put anything over the kitten. The kitten will revive quickly, and in ten minutes it will be standing up and trying to climb out of the colander. When it seems quite all right restore it to the mother cat. N.B.—As soon as the kitten seems sufficiently "cooked" turn out the gas. Wrap the kit in dry blanket before taking it back to the mother. Advantages of steam cooking are: (1) Moist warmth seems to revive the kit better than dry heat; (2) It gets warm all over instead of only on one side; (3) It gets plenty of air and freedom to move and stretch its limbs and expand its lungs, because it is not covered with anything.

MESSRS. SHERLEY & Co.'s advertisement of their well-known specialities appears in another column. They tell us that already 100,000 copies of the first edition of *Hints to*

*Cat Lovers* are in circulation, and a new edition is now being prepared with much additional information as to 26 varieties of Cats, hints on preparation for Show, and other interesting matter.

MESSRS. SPRATT'S Patent are also advertising their wares, and animal lovers of all kinds can rely on finding something to suit their needs on application to this firm.

A LITTLE BIRD whispers that Miss Sedgemore, of Exeter, is shortly to marry. It is to be hoped that new interests will not alienate her from the Cat world: the West Country Fancy could ill afford to lose her support.

I HAVE now received twenty-four guarantees of £5 each instead of the twenty first suggested by Mr. Percival. In addition, several fanciers have guaranteed smaller sums, *if required*. This, I hope, will not be the case. It will not be, if friends will work to get us new subscribers and advertisements. But from what I hear there is still a secret opposition being staged by a few persons, for what reason I cannot tell.

MISS LOWNDES, whose Malay kitten we referred to last week, is a daughter, not a sister, of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes.

ACCORDING TO the wireless journal *Radio-phonie pour Tous*, the Los Angeles Cat Show was declared open by the cats themselves, a Persian taking the rôle of announcer at the microphone.

MRS. BAZELY writes that she will shortly place at stud, in our columns, her beautiful L.H. Colneside Carol, a son of Billy Bumpet the Robinson Crusoe cat. She has also Billy's grand cream son, Colneside Cream Burne. This cat has been sold to Madame Dolli, the famous dancer, but this lady having gone to Italy, the use of his services is available at West Drayton for a short time only. *Verb. sap!* He is the result of mating a tortoise daughter of Ch. Shazada to Billy B.

MISS J. M. FISHER'S Idol and Ivanhoe of Hadley enter our Stud Columns. A black and a blue, they are both sons of Azure of Hadley, and proved sires, they are worthy our readers' attention.

THE *Annual Register*, January, 1791, published this piece of idiocy: A child of eighteen months old was found dead near Plymouth, and it appeared, on the coroner's inquest, that the child died in consequence of a cat sucking its breath, thereby occasioning a strangulation."

## CATS I HAVE LOVED.

BY SIR CLAUD ALEXANDER, BART.

Do shows really benefit the cats we all love so dearly? When I read of the appalling mortality from that D——d Disease, Distemper (with your largest D's, Mr. Printer, please), I am inclined to answer "No!" Again, do we make the most of our cats as friends? I fear not, for in the rush for prizes there is little time to consider their mental qualities, and the routine of a show cattery leaves hardly any scope for them to develop their natural proclivities. Yet, even so, many of them find an outlet for their talents, and even for themselves. Witness the charming photograph we know so well of Mr. Percival's Champion Slightly opening the cattery door. And so many cats find good homes, and so many owners real pleasure through the shows, that perhaps we may hope that the good outweighs the evil. Anyhow, if it be a sin to show cats, I must plead guilty to being a hardened sinner, and this is how I came to fall. When we set up house in 1896 we gravitated towards Leadenhall Market (in those days full of live stock shops) in search of a house cat, and we were at once attracted by a large blue tom which the owner assured us was a very fine Siamese! The price was 10/-, which seemed altogether outrageous for a cat, so we went home catless. However, the memory of the blue tom haunted us, and eventually we went back and bought him. We soon learnt that a large tom is not the ideal house cat, but when we entered him at the first Cat Club Show as "Ballochmyle Bumpums," and found his pen smothered with firsts and specials, we felt that we were condemned to cat shows for life. The old chap had many virtues and one vice—he could not endure the sight of kittens, and would have killed them at once. As a mate for him, a birdshop in Hounslow produced a 5/- queen, said to be Japanese. She had a diamond locket on her throat which denied her a show career. Her name was Mum Bunch, and of all the animals I have owned she has the warmest corner in my heart. As round as a ball she was, and she would fly through the house like lightning, leaving all who saw her convulsed with laughter. She was full of mischief and could never resist the temptation to open and inspect a parcel; and, on fine evenings, she would slip out and hide under a bush while we called in vain, but

at dinner she was always there to sit on my shoulder and intercept bits off my fork on their way to my mouth! From these two all our home-bred cats—black, white, blue, and cream—are descended. Their daughter, Miss Muffet, was another character. Too proud to go to shows, she was the most self-possessed cat I have ever met. She would travel to Scotland, and sit on one's knee and look out of the window, without taking any notice of even the noisiest stations. She lived to a ripe old age, and always slept on my bed. In cold weather she would settle on one's feet, and if one dared to move so much as a toe she would growl angrily, and if the annoyance continued drive in a claw or two! Then there was the invincible blue, "Brother Bump" (found by my brother-in-law tied to the door handle of a one-room tenement in the east end of London) and his magpie dam, "Mother Bump." The former loved shows, and would purr when he saw his basket and jump into it at once. But he was very excitable, and the one thing that drove him to frenzy was the sight of a donkey! His mother was calmness personified, and she emulated Champion Slightly's accomplishments, for in our shooting hut in Rosshire all the doors had high latches, and she would jump up and let herself in or out of any room she pleased. She never bred another blue, but she had two glorious blue-eyed white kittens, one of which was known to show fame as Champion "White Violet."

Only a few cats will tackle really large rats, but Champion Sophia, the silver tabby, was a mighty huntress before the Lord, and she would catch any number in a night, and I would find them in the morning all laid out in a row, as a keeper does his game, and every one of them was bitten just behind the ear. She would never kill with anyone looking on. I have tried letting rats out of a trap under her nose, but she pretended not to see them. On the other hand, Snow Tuffet will not hunt by himself, but if I carry him about in the evening till he sees a rat he will pounce on it with the greatest fury—fury which is only equalled by Red Rust with a muffin, which he will growl over and tear to bits before he eats it! Red Rust hates shows like poison, and the sight of a show basket will send him screaming to the top of his house. Yet he does not seem to mind them when he gets there, and takes even the ordeal of judging for best in show with philosophy. Quite different is the cream Butter Bean. It is said "Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,"

but the author of that proverb had not seen Butter Bean running about at home. Yet he loves a show and all the preparations for it, and he has quite a coterie of friends, strangers to me, who come and talk to him at shows and assure me that he is the most angelic cat on earth. And what of Puff, who provided so much copy for the papers? And why did he make for the organ instead of for the stack of chairs which attracts most fugitives? Because he lives with the cows, and his favourite perch is on the rafters over them; so when anything frightens him his instinct is to rush upwards. How difficult it is to escape publicity! Within twenty minutes of his capture, and long before we knew of it, half-a-dozen reporters with cameras were on the scene.

And now for the last, or at any rate the latest, of the loved ones. When I was sitting one day in Mrs. Yeates' drawing room there rolled into the room and into my heart "A daughter of the Gods" (Champions Gentleman of Henley and Misty Morning, to wit), divinely round and most divinely blue, and, seeing that it would be cruelty to cats and men to part us, Mrs. Yeates most kindly gave her to me. She stays with me alike when I am working out of doors and when I am writing. In the latter case she crosses her hands on mine and sits in silence which is broken only by her constant purring. She has many names—to show goers she is "Mayfair," to Mrs. Yeates "Marik," and to me "Mum Bunch"—a name I had never hoped to use again.

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## VISITS.

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Feb. 8th.—Mrs. Jones' **Willow Moth** to Miss Harmer's **Camperdown**.

Feb. 14th.—Miss Harmer's **O Tama San** to Mr. Cuaey's **Cheshire Puss** (Tortie and White Male).

March 1st.—Miss Beardesley's **Angela**; March 5th.—Mrs. Dame's **Dusty**, both to Miss Harmer's **Camperdown**.

March 12th.—Lady Bower's **Butterfly Meadow Sweet**; March 17th.—Mrs. Bagnall's **Siamese Queen**, both to Mrs. Hindley's **Simzo**.

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Is a book published some sixty years ago we read:—In Abyssinia, cats are so valuable that a marriageable girl who is likely to come in for a cat is looked upon as quite an heiress—yet it is only a little over a year ago that the well-known and much-lionised explorer and author, Rosita Forbes, wrote that she had never seen a domestic cat in Abyssinia.

## A MENACE TO CATDOM.

FOR TWO weeks running "Cat Gossip" has drawn attention to the menace which is threatening all cat owners, in the Bill which the College of Pestology intends bringing before Parliament. This provides, we understand, for a tax of 2/6 on every kitten over a certain age, such licence to be available for that particular kitten only! Need we again point out that this would mean a ruinous and quite unendurable burden on all cat breeders. It would mean the creation of a new horde of inspectors, or other fearful wild fowl of that ilk, to carry out its provisions (hardly necessary to ask from whose pockets their salaries would be drawn!) It would mean an unbearable system of spying and inquisitive investigation! Our warning, however, would seem to have been as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, for all the effect it has had in certain quarters where the interests of catdom should be studied. On a previous occasion (*despite the efforts of the writer of these lines*) the interests of the cat fancy were apathetically neglected, by those who should have studied them, until too late, with the result that cats and mice alone, of all fancy show stock, are denied the privilege of returning from shows at half price! Having published its warning, "Cat Gossip" considers it has done its duty; and that it is now "up to" the cat fancy, and all cat owners, to see that this time they are better served and their interests studied! We ask, "What is going to be done to avert this menace?"

## IN THE GARDEN.

THE FIRST touch of Spring is in the air. The earth has rolled away her white coverlet, and the green of the grass, the buds of the trees, and the glistening heads of snowdrops and crocus show bright against their dark background.

In the greenhouse the plants are early astir. On the fence, above the magnolia, sit "Dewdrop" and "Dainty Lady." This is their first outing unattended, but Adam, as usual, keeps guard, and allows no intruders to come near. I opened the window and they all shot out like arrows from a bow!

Dewdrop to climb to the top of the old plum tree, and her daughter to sway giddily in the heights of the magnolia.

They then explored every nook and cranny of the garden, peeping under bushes, hiding

behind shrubs, burrowing in odd corners with the greatest joy imaginable, the Rose of Sharon especially coming in for a great deal of attention. The door of the greenhouse is ajar, and they have made a complete study of its contents, and I trust they approve the selection of spring flowers. From my sanctuary window I see "Dewdrop" stepping daintily as is her wont on the high fence which separates our garden from another. As she walks she takes in deep draughts of the fresh Spring air, and rubs her nose against the branches of the trees with every symptom of delight.

A shrill cry tells me that "Perdita" feels neglected, but "Day Dream" preserves her usual attitude of superiority, and from the windows of her garden house surveys the world with inscrutable eyes.

Her name suits her perfectly, for she certainly dreams by day.

But when the evening comes, and the curtains are drawn, and the lamps lit, no words will describe her activities!

This is her hour:

"When glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom."

M. ESTELLE OGLETHORPE.

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Own a  
Cat . .



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## WHAT IS THE RUSSIAN CAT?

THE QUESTION asked by Mrs. Lawrence about the Russian cat seems to have aroused a good deal of interest, judging by the letters I have had. I remember when I was quite a small boy, and L.H. cats were yet so scarce that people would turn round or even cross the road to look at a specimen seen in a garden, they were indifferently called Russians, Persians, and Angoras, by the man in the street. These names, however, are often of no value in determining the real country of origin of the animals concerned, as witness the "Peruvian" Cavy, the "Abyssinian" Cavy, the "Himalayan" Rabbit—not to mention other recent "manufactures" in the rabbit line.

### MALTESE, OR CARTHUSIAN?

In most countries the classification of domestic cats is arranged on different lines to ours, and based more upon scientific principles; although I should not like to offer an opinion as to the value to be attached to them, for of all domestic animals I do believe least is known about the cat. In America, the blue S.H. is commonly known as the

Maltese cat; whilst many older English writers call it the Carthusian. Miss Nancy Richardson writes that she has heard of at least two which have been brought in recent years from Archangel, one as mascot in a British warship, the other by a merchant captain. Miss Richardson continues:—"I also remember as a child seeing the largest cat I have ever known, as big as a Cocker spaniel; a lethargic tabby, said to be a Russian."

### HARRISON WEIR ON RUSSIANS (1889).

In his book, "Our Cats," the Father of Cat Shows stated that the S.H. blue was first shown as an Archangel cat, then as Russian blue. He did not consider it a distinct breed, as he had known them produced from cats with no trace of blue. At the end of the chapter he added:—"I feel bound to admit that those that came from Archangel were of a deeper, purer, tint than the English cross-breds, and they had larger eyes and ears, and were larger and longer in the head and legs, also the coat or fur was excessively short, rather inclined to woolliness, but bright and glossy, the hair inside the ears being shorter than is usual in the English cat."

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## WHO SHALL DECIDE WHEN DOCTORS DISAGREE?

So far, everything seems all straight. But now we get another version. Dr. Jumaud in his book, *Les Races de Chats* (1926), largely based on the works of Professor Cornevin, of Lyons, gives this description of the Carthusian cat (*Felis catus carthusianorum*), which he states to be rare in England and France but common in the United States, where it is known as the Maltese cat. "It is found in Russia, where it forms the sub-varieties of Tobolsk, Korassan, or Caucasus. It is one of the races which can live in the low temperatures of high mountain districts. It is there that it is found, and thence taken to Russian territory. Their lives pass from one extreme to the other. During the brief Russian summer they wander in the woods, infested with venomous insects; in winter they are imprisoned between the four walls of a snow-covered cabin, constrained to domestic life until the thaw comes. Many of the furs which reach us from Russia are really made from the skins of these cats. The Carthusian cat has a tendency to laziness; it is, however, a good hunter. *Head* large, with large and full eyes, small and erect ears, short nose. *Coat*, half long and woolly, and it is this woolly consistency which forms the principal characteristic of the breed, and is found even in specimens whose fur is not long. *Colour*, uniform grey, with bluish reflections, in the proper Carthusian breed, reddish in the Tobolsk variety."

## CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED.

Here we have very varying accounts, but both agreeing as to the woolly texture of the fur.

In a separate section devoted to the Tobolsk variety we read:—"This variety, described by Gmelin, exists in Siberia, and is sometimes called the Tobolsk cat. It is larger than our common cat, and somewhat resembles the Carthusian in shape. The head is large, with big eyes, short nose, and small erect ears. *Coat*: as is fitting for an animal of a cold country, the Tobolsk cat has long fur, longer than that of the Chartreuse cat. Its texture is woolly, and in colour, uniformly reddish."

Yet another blue or grey cat is described as being found almost exclusively in the Isle of Cyprus. The fur is short, light grey, the soles black, ears short and erect. It would seem then that Miss Richardson is correct

when she writes: "I think this shows that the Russian Blue has some claim to this name. Unfortunately they were largely crossed with British Blues, and in many I think there is a distinct trace of L.H. blood. These crosses are much to be deplored, as, though the first progeny may pass muster, "murder will out," and you get longish open coats, round heads, and the yellow eye, which will take generations of selective breeding to stamp out. Thus in the early days of cat shows and breeding there seem to have been the L.H. Russian cat of a large size from South Russia and the Blue foreign-looking S.H. from the more northern ports round Archangel."

## WHAT OUR READERS SAY.

"I AM so glad you are carrying on. I am sure it is a fine thing for the cat."

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"I am so glad you've started a paper exclusively for cats, and wish it every success."

(Mrs.) L. USSHER ROBERTS (Kilkenny).

By the report of a police case at Marlborough Street on June 28th, 1866, it appears that a man, brutally ill-using his wife, flung her on the floor and endeavoured to strangle her. While she lay there her favourite cat suddenly sprang at him, fastening her teeth and claws in his face, and compelling him to implore his victim to take the cat from him to save his eyes if not his life.

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