

# CAT • GOSSIP

VOL. 1

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Edited by H. C. BROOKE

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## AN ELEGY ON PETER, AGED TWELVE.

In vain the kindly call: in vain  
 The plate for which thou once wast fain  
 At morn and noon and daylight's wane,  
 O king of mousers:  
 No more I hear thee purr and purr,  
 As in the frolic days that were,  
 When thou didst rub thy velvet fur  
 Against my trousers.

How empty are the places where  
 Thou erst wert frankly debonair,  
 Nor dreamed a dream of feline care,  
 A capering kitten:  
 Thy sunny haunts where, grown a cat,  
 You pondered this, considered that,  
 By firelight smitten.

Though brief thy life, a little span  
 Of days compared with that of man,  
 The time allotted to thee ran  
 In smoother metre:  
 Now with the warm earth o'er thy breast,  
 O wisest of thy kind and best!  
 Forever mayst thou softly rest  
*In pace, Peter.*

CLINTON SCOLLARD, in *Concerning Cats.*

## Gossip of the Week.

MISS OLDFIELD HOWEY, the well-known author and leader in humanitarian circles, writes: "I am so glad you are making a protest against the Bill for Taxing Cats. Would it be any good asking owners to write to their M.P.'s? The tax would prove not only very costly, but almost impossible of collection, besides inflicting much needless suffering on cats and their poorer owners."

GOATS' MILK, Miss Howey points out, should be more used by cat-breeders. It has twice

the food value of cows' milk, and goats never have tuberculosis, from which so many cattle suffer.

It is remarkable what a number of Siamese lovers seem to favour the "kink." People of great experience, too! We do not wish to rush in where angels fear to tread; but our view is this: When we are dealing with a breed which, like the Siamese, differs so very greatly from other varieties of the same species, we should be in favour, unless there were urgent reasons to the contrary, of encouraging any property helping to accentuate such difference. In this instance, therefore, we would encourage the "kink."

TALKING ABOUT tails: how many of my readers remember the black British, "Dickie Darling," which won a few prizes for Mrs. Stoneham about thirty years ago? He used to carry his tail tightly curled over one hip in the manner of a pugdog.

MENTION OF "Dickie" reminds me of a humorous incident which took place in the days of shows at the old "Tank" at Westminster, with the passing of which so much of the old-time fun and jollity seemed to be taken from London shows. It was at one of The Cat Club's shows there, and the cook at a hostelry opposite, where show officials were wont to put up, entered a cat there, of which she was very fond, just "for a lark," and it won. Friend Fowler, at that time with "Camphylene," hatched with Show-Manager Sparrow a wicked plot, and told the cook that they were very sorry but the cat had been claimed and must go. The cook—a lady of Gargantuan proportions—seized the carving knife, and chased the Fowler and "The Bird" off the premises. She then went across and fastened the cat securely in its pen with a collection of assorted padlocks, and seeing that the meat for the cats was sprinkled with Pepsinated Food, swore that they were being fed on sawdust, hurried back and commandeered all the sardines and ham sandwiches from her employer's counter, and

took them over to the "Tank" to feed the cats upon!

CEDALITE, advertised by Mr. Jeal, of Hounslow, is well recommended by Miss Busted, and other members of the Siamese Fancy, and being much disliked by insects is well worth a trial in the cattery.

MISS ADYE writes that she fell in love with Miss Morant's beautiful Abyssinian, and hopes she will not "fall for" the breed. We can assure her she will make no mistake if she does take up this most graceful and beautiful race of most ancient lineage. And a good Abyssinian always has a good chance for "best S.H."

MRS. RICHARDSON'S huge black and white cat, "from the burning sands of Africa," caused quite a sensation at Kentish Town, and proved a godsend to the reporters of the daily Press. In to-day's "Cat Gossip" his owner relates his full history for the first time.

MRS. NEATE, we regret to learn, has been unwell and unable to write her "Red" Chat for the week.

IF the "celebrated orange cats of Venice," described by a writer just over a quarter of a century ago, as "probably descendants of the old Egyptian cat, and of varying shades of yellow, sometimes deepening into red, but faintly marked on limbs and end of tail," still exist. We wish someone would import a few! Just what we want for producing S.H. creams, and the unmarked red might restore to the Abyssinian the beautiful tints which have been lost since the days of Sedgemere Bottle and Sedgemere Peaty the unequalled.

MRS. ELLABY is hoping for great things from her Bonzo—Princess Cleo litter—both parents being famous in the Siamese world for "best progeny." Princess Cleo, who is now the proud owner of the Britannia Cup, having won it for three years, is now seven years old, but, like the matron of to-day, does not parade her age and seems quite equal to rearing another family. As she has already bred such sensational and perfect specimens as Rocleo, Mon Tecla, Simon, Gentle, Simple, Ruth, Pride, etc., we shall be on the tiptoe of expectation to see what her mating with Bonzo produces.

I AM glad to note that some people—not "fanciers"—regard more seriously than the Fancy seem to do, the threat of a cat tax. In one quarter I hear of canvassing for signa-

tures and an appeal to the local M.P. I suppose the Cat Fancy, with that apathy which is to-day England's chief characteristic (except as regards football!) will sit tight and wait till they "get it in the neck," as the Americans did Prohibition. Think of it you big breeders—26 for every kitten over three months, and licences to be for individual kittens only! Does the prospect appeal? If not, DO SOMETHING!

MRS. VELEY, who is judging Siamese at the Palace, has just exported one of them to Australia, and another from the the same cattery has gone to North Wales. Mrs. Veley is not "down on" the kink; but what she does *not* like are short ugly tails. Quite another tale that!

AS ARTEMUS WARD said, "I laff, I du!" when reading this par in a contemporary anent Miss Morant's cats:—"The Manx queen, Iris, is in kitten to So-and-so, and another winning queen, Zoey, is to be mated to Saka, . . . so Miss Morant hopes for a fine litter of this fascinating variety." If we understand the English language, this must mean Manx, as this is the only variety mentioned—only it so happens that Saka is an Abyssinian! Lower down the same writer refers to a statement "in a contemporary" to the effect that Siamese are voiceless! To avoid misapprehension, we would say, "Please, sir, it wasn't me!"

MRS. CAREW-COX has kindly lent us a copy of a quaint old book, "The Cat," by the Honourable Lady Cust. This is the second edition, published in 1870, and now very rare. It is dedicated to Professor Owen. The writer observes, "In the present day a love for cats appears chiefly permitted to 'elderly spinsters,' and is often even ridiculed." Since then "*nous avons changé cela!*" "Of the wild cat there is supposed to be only one species, which extends with trifling variety of colour over all parts of the world, the difference from the tame variety being more in the internal than in the external structure, its intestine being the shortest and smallest of all the quadrupeds." "Hiertro dello Valli evidently means the Angora kind when he says, 'There is in Persia a cat (particularly in the province of Choragan) of the figure and form of our ordinary ones, but infinitely more beautiful in the lustre and colour of its skin. It is of a grey blue, without mixture, and as soft and shining as silk. The tail is of great length and covered with hair six inches long, which the animal throws on its back like a

squirrel." "Bosman relates that in the province of Pe-chily, in China, there are cats with long hair and drooping ears, which are in great favour with the Chinese ladies; others say this is not a cat but an animal called 'Samxces.'"

LADY CUST went on to say that she was ridiculed by many, even by learned members of the Zoological Society, for asserting grass to be a necessity for cats. Her advice for treating the simple ailments of cats was good, but she recommended slitting the ear as a cure for fits, a practice I remember to be still somewhat prevalent in my boyhood's days. The following remedy for vomiting, which, Mrs. Veley writes, is much to be recommended: "Stop it as soon as you can by giving half a teaspoonful of melted beef marrow, free from skin; one dose is generally sufficient, but if not another half-teaspoonful may be given in half an hour. To allay vomiting from irritation I have never seen this remedy fail in human or animal subject."

CAT-POX is described as "a disease like chicken-pox in human subjects will sometimes appear in spring and autumn, chiefly on the throat and head." For this, cooling diet, grass, and lard and brimstone ointment are with good reason recommended.

THE BOOKLET modestly ends, "I have now written all that would be interesting or useful on the subject of cats." What would the authoress have said could she have seen some of our present-day catty literature?

MRS. JEPSON, representing L.H., and Miss Nancy Richardson, for S.H., are the two new committee members of the Croydon Cat Club, Mrs. Cran being President.

WE understand that Mrs. Cran (the new President of the C.C.C.) will judge Siamese at Croydon. This should ensure a bumper entry.

THE S.H. classes at the Palace (National Cat Club) will be taken by Mr. H. C. Brooke. MRS. OAKLEY, of Newmarket, we regret to learn, has lost all her cats, and with them all interest in the Fancy.

THE CAT COURIER says:—"Mrs. Leila A. Patterson, Keswick Cattery, Vancouver, is importing another pair of cats from England, this time Chinchillas."

MRS. CAREW-COX has been elected Vice-President of Croydon Cat Club, in recognition of her long years' connection with the Fancy. A well deserved honour!—and so say all of us.

## MY EGYPTIAN CAT.

By MRS. J. H. RICHARDSON.

I HAVE been asked to write an account of my cat I brought home from Egypt in 1925. Visitors to Kentish Town this year may have noticed him in the S.H. Neuter Class. I entered him purely as an interesting specimen, for, as far as I know, he is the only one of his type in this country. I am told this breed is in no way related to the real Egyptian—or Caffre cat.

The type of which I write are half wild, and are found near any Bedouin encampment or outskirts of civilization. They hide as much as possible during the day, and come out at night to feed on what they can find amongst the refuse of civilization. They are large, very powerful, with long legs and short necks. Marked with the honourable scars of many battles, their small ears are set wide apart on a broad square-looking head, with their rather oblique eyes generally wide open, blazing contempt and defiance at their many enemies.

I was riding near a Bedouin encampment outside Alexandria, when I startled from the low scrub the skinniest, ugliest, half-grown cat that ever lived, trailing a string-like tail as he scudded across the hot sand.

Being really fond of cats, and also rather interested in these semi-wild creatures, and anxious to know if they ever would respond to kind treatment and become tame, I decided to give chase. After a gallant struggle for his freedom, I was successful in catching the little fellow, scratching and swearing to the end, though quite exhausted. Thanks to thick riding gloves I got him home and shut him up.

Although at first terrified and darting away to the farthest corner, whenever I went near him, and using the most dreadful language, he responded to patience and kind treatment most extraordinarily quickly. At the end of a fortnight he would eat meat from my hand.

When I first gave him freedom again I was very nervous lest he should roam away, but not so. There he was, there he meant to stay. On a diet of raw meat and water he grew in size if not in beauty! People said he was hideous—short hair, a hopelessly irregular black and white coat, and a black patch just covering one eye. But he became extraordinarily attached to me, and followed me everywhere. I would return in the car

to find him waiting at the garden gate, and he would leap all round me with pleasure as I entered. When he was about nine months old I had to return to England. I bought a basket, and when packing began he adopted it as his bed without any suggestion from me. Before embarking I moved to an hotel. He came, too, and loved it, except once, when he made the curious mistake of going into the room that exactly corresponded to mine on the floor lower down, where he vainly waited for me till I found him.

On the ship I let him loose altogether, and having once asserted himself amongst the legion of ship's cats, he settled comfortably, and never failed to find my cabin. There is no quarantine for cats. From Southampton to London—a night in a hotel—then down to Norfolk. Loose in the train he was well satisfied. In the train it was simply a matter of a good look round, a good curl up and a good sleep! He did his duty as a guest at Norfolk by completely ridding a barn of rats, no less than by avoiding any collision with the pet poodle of the house.

From Norfolk I moved to a cottage in Hampshire. It was on a farm, and he settled down only too well. His bag the first week was two baby chickens and many small rabbits.

These poaching habits could only be remedied by tying him up, which disgrace he suffered willingly (at the end of a twenty-foot string on the lawn) until I moved to another house, where he now enjoys complete freedom, and can poach to his heart's content.

He never roams far afield, except to follow me if I go for walks in the evenings, and then I have known him do as much as five miles! Of dogs he has no fear and can hold his own, as a large Airedale is able to bear witness since a slight difference of opinion a little while ago.

He has grown huge now; he weighs 16½ pounds, and is a peculiar cat in his intense personal devotion and wonderful intelligence.

I have owned many pets, cats and dogs, but none can be compared with this cat, he is all but human.

People still say he is ugly; but if he is (which I refuse to believe), well, he is beautifully ugly!

Cats have a commercial importance in certain lines of trade. Marine insurance does not cover damage done to the cargo by rats, but if the proprietor of the merchandise injured can prove that the ship was not furnished with a cat, he can recover compensation from the vessel's owner.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

By MARION SHERIDAN-JONES.

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Mr. Ridgwell Cullum is a giant among writers of romantic tales of the back o' the beyond, and this is one of his best. Here are real people. The tragedy which leaves Wolf an orphan in the care of a half-caste nurse is staged with a realism that is rare. The boy finds himself at the mercy of a thief, who becomes also a murderer. But for the sake of the young girl, who is daughter to Pideau, Wolf holds his hand and does not betray his dreadful secret. Later he is himself betrayed, but the inherent decency of the young man carries him through, and he emerges triumphant and untamed. If the end of his adventure seems far fetched it only needs a little reflection to realise that no other result was possible, for Wolf is true to himself throughout, and his characterisation is masterly.

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March 19th. — Mrs. Richardson's White Persian, **Sapphire of Farnborough**, 3 beautiful kittens by Miss Edgar's **Sidi-Kaid**.

March 22nd. — Mrs. Ellaby's Siamese, **Princess Cleo**, 7 kittens by Ch: **Bonzo**.

**VISITS.**

March 13th. — Miss Hill Shaw's **Hop It** to Miss Kent's **Eubonius**.

March 18th. — Miss H. Hill Shaw's **Xenia of Cademuir** to owner's **Prince Petrie of Cademuir**.

March 22nd. — Miss Hill Shaw's **Andromeda** to owner's **Prince Petrie of Cademuir**.

March 17th. — Mrs. Bagnal's **Piety**: March 24th. — Miss Williams' **Kiuke**, both to Mrs. Hindley's **Simzo**.

WE ARE pleased to hear that Miss Wakeford has returned safely from China, but is very much knocked up by the journey. She did not see anything in the feline way over there, in fact—perhaps not unnaturally in the circumstances—she did not go on shore very much, so that she saw nothing but the ship's cats, which she fancied had adopted a nautical roll. Miss Wakeford's well-known S.H. blues are at stud, and will shortly be portrayed in "Cat Gossip."

**WHAT OUR READERS SAY.**

"I AM thankful a real Cat Paper has started. I like the cat part of "Fur and Feather," but cats want a paper of their own, and "Cat Gossip" is full of interest."

(Mrs.) E. M. BROUGHTON-HAWLEY.

"I AM very delighted with the paper."

(MISS) VIOLET RYDER.

"I REALLY think "Cat Gossip" might take the late M. Coué's slogan, Every day I am getting better."

(MISS) NANCY RICHARDSON.

Few even amongst pussy's admirers, who have heard the music of cats, would desire the continuance of their "sweet voices." Yet a concert was exhibited in Paris, wherein cats were the performers. They were placed in rows, and a monkey beat time to them as the cats mewed. And the historian relates that the diversity of the tones produced a very ludicrous effect. The exhibition was announced to the Parisian public by the title of "Concert Miaulant."—From *The Book of Cats*, 1867.

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IN some parts of Lancashire, at any rate up to the latter half of last century, a Tom was called a Gib or Gibbe cat (hard g). Tibert, the name of the cat in *Reynard the Fox*, was perhaps the old French name for Gilbert. Undoubtedly the name "Tibbie" comes from Tibert. Fennell, however, writing in 1843, in his *Natural History of Quadrupeds*, states:—"Most of the former (he-cats) that are kept are emasculated, in which state, always accompanied with a subdued and melancholy appearance, they are called *Gilberts* or *Gib-cats*. Thus Shakespeare makes Falstaff say,

"I am as melancholy as a gib-cat."

(Henry IV., Act 1, Sc. 2).

Chaucer, in his *Romance of the Rose*, renders *Thibert le Cas* by "Gibbe our Cat."

THE CAT appears in old Celtic lore and mythology. The fabled heroes, whose love of adventure or a woman, set forth on their wondrous adventures over unknown seas, must pass through many perils ere they reach their Isles of Enchantment, or safely return home again. Demons, red-hot swine, ants as big as calves, Judas chained to a rock, and *stinging cats*, are amongst the horrors encountered by the Celtic braves.

IN THE *Conjuror's Magazine*, 1791, occurs the following quaint recipe "to draw cats together and fascinate them":

"In the new moon gather the herb \*Nepe, and dry it in the heat of the sun; gather vervain in the hour 8, and only expose it to the air while the moon is under the earth. Hang these together in a net in a convenient place, and when one of them has scented it her cry will soon call those about within hearing; and they will rant and run about, leaping and capering to get at the net, which must be hung or placed so that they cannot accomplish it, or they will tear it in pieces. Near Bristol is a 'Field of Cats,' from a large number being drawn together by this contrivance."

\* Probably cat-mint (*Nepeta cataria*).—Ed.

ONE of the exhibits in the at one time celebrated London exhibition of curiosities which were on view at "Don Saltero's Coffee House," in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea (the "Don" being John Salter, once the trusty servant of Sir Hans Sloane, the eminent physician and naturalist)—which collection, opened in 1690, was sold by auction in 1799—was a starved and shrivelled cat, found between the walls

of Westminster Abbey when the east end was being rebuilt.

FEW have heard of the word "Haret," as applied to the Wild Cat. Dr. Jumaud, the secretary of the Cat Club de France, writes in his book that the old French masters of the Chase (most of our hunting terms are derived from Old France the land *par excellence* of Venerie!) thus named this animal. The Vicomte de Simony considers that the name "comes doubtless from that given by the Hebrews to the Haret belonging to the tribe of Judah which possessed a considerable number of cats."

"In many respects cats are more like men and woman than dogs; they have moods, and their nature is complex. Every cat has a character peculiar to itself. There is more individuality in cats."—*Concerning Cats*.

It was stated that before the earthquake at Messina a merchant noticed his two cats excitedly scratching at the door of his room, which he opened, when they flew downstairs and began scratching at the door of the house. He let them out and followed them; they ran through the streets and out into the open field, but even then seemed half mad with fright and scratched and tore at the grass. Shortly after occurred the first shock, and the merchant's house, amongst many others, came thundering in ruins to the ground.

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**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. As-sist. Editor, London Agency and Book Reviews: M. Sheridan-Jones, 11, Tunley Road, London, S.W. 17.

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