

CAT GOSSIP

VOL. 1

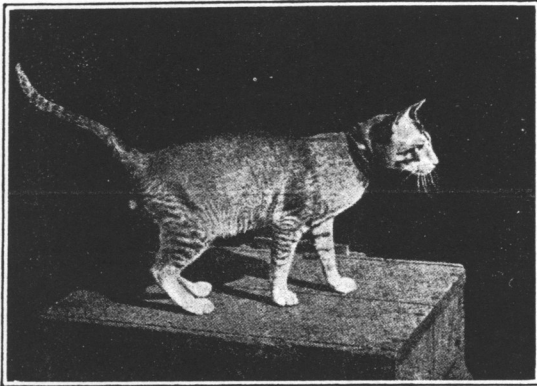
Phone : Battersea 4358

Edited by H. C. BROOKE

No 21

APRIL 27th, 1927

Price 3d., post free



A 1901 SENSATION:
Mr. H. C. Brooke's Indian Red S.H.

Gossip of the Week.

WE REGRET to hear that Mrs. Bassett has had an infectious complaint brought to her place by a visiting queen, which resulted in the loss of several of her kittens. Some, however, she has saved by the use of "Dimol." Strange to say, none of the adult cats were affected. Mrs. Bassett expects to be judging again on the Continent in the near future.

A NOVICE fancier writes us quite an agitated letter, asking if it "is really necessary for a cattery to be an annexe of a chemist's shop?" and pointing out that a certain writer recommends an inquirer living in the country to keep a materia medica of thirty-one articles in stock. We can only say that having owned from time to time, and successfully exhibited, hundreds of dogs, dozens of cats, and many other animals, during some forty-five years of animal keeping, we have never used half of these drugs, etc. There are people who transform their own internal economy into a fair imitation of a chemist's shop after an earthquake, and we imagine there are those who would do likewise with their pets. Sir Claud Alexander, after over forty years' experience of varied live stock, recently stated that he kept **four**

remedies in stock. We can assure our correspondent that she may very well confine herself to some half-a-dozen items, in the ordinary way, without fear of calamity, and feel herself equal to ordinary emergencies. We think with some people "l'appetit vient en mangeant" as regards the constant use of drugs, etc., which may become quite a craze.

LACTOL (see Messrs. Sherley's advertisement) is an excellent thing for rearing young carnivorous animals on from the earliest age. We have used it for years with great success for all kinds, including a baby hyena, which appeared to be "at death's door," but grew into a fine specimen.

WE QUITE agree with M. de Southoff's remarks as to the difficulty and uncertainty of trying to adopt a scientific classification of domestic cats, at any rate of the Europeans. They have for so long been ignored and neglected that it seems futile now to endeavour to classify them in a scientific manner—after all, they are not different species, or even sub-species, if we except, perhaps, the Manx. We remember that about twenty-five years ago one who was considered a very great authority claimed that the Manx and the Abyssinian were scientifically very closely allied, but preserved a discreet silence when interrogated as to the "why and wherefore."

THE "DAILY MAIL" has ere now said nasty things about cats, but one of its writers makes noble amends in saying:—"So far as literary men are concerned, most authors have delighted in the company of cats. Frequently your author is an irritable fellow, and the sight of a cat sitting peacefully by the fire, or in the sunshine, helps to bring serenity to his restless soul." Our sentiments to a T! Surely, the most soothing influence in the world is the purring cat.

JUST twenty-five years ago, Mrs. H. V. James, the Hon. Secretary of the Silver and Smoke Persian Cat Society, mooted the idea of holding a show at which all the exhibits should be judged in ring classes, on collar and lead, as dogs are judged. We do not remember the scheme coming to fruition, and think it would always be a risky experiment as far as tom-cats are concerned—when it would be something like judging a class of Esquimaux or Dogue de Bordeaux.

WE REALLY wonder if the truth about the Siamese Cat, his tail, and his native status, ever will be clearly made known. One used to hear about the Temple Cats, as distinct from the Palace strain; nowadays the former are rarely heard of. We have in a previous number quoted the remarks made over a quarter of a century ago by the then King of Siam and his private secretary as to the Palace Cats and their tails. This was in May, 1901. In October, 1901, there appeared in "Our Cats" an article by someone who had approached the Siamese Legation with six questions, receiving the following reply from the Chief Secretary of Legation. Our only comment upon this is that a chief secretary of Legation, or even an Ambassador, need not, necessarily, be an authority on matters feline. This Legation official admitted that he was not a specialist, but wrote:—

1. The common cat of Siam is usually a tabby or a black cat. The variety known in England as "Siamese Cat" is comparatively rare in Siam. . . . The fawn-coloured animal with the dark points and blue eyes is rare in all parts of the country. In Bangkok, because there are more leisured people who can devote time to hobbies of this sort, these cats are bred a good deal. Some of them have no kink in the tail, this being by no means a necessity for a cat of good points. In the absence of the kink the tail should be long and full. . . . The cats are somewhat delicate: they are distinctly aristocratic, have plenty of dignity, form strong friendships, are very friendly with dogs, fond of hunting and sport of all kinds. . . .
2. The King of Siam does not keep a special breed, nor are there any specially preserved in the Palace. The negative also applies to your question 3, "Whether this cat is the Royal Cat of Siam?" There is no Royal Cat of Siam, and, 4, consequently no special police to take charge. 5. Nor does any religious sanctity attach to any cat of Siam. I might add that amongst the Buddhists of Siam any albino form is regarded with special interest. . . . the albino elephant, for instance, is supposed to be a form in which the Buddha may return to earth. The ignorant people usually regard the albino form of any animal as something to be "wai'd" or salaamed to, much as we might take off a hat to a magpie. Possibly the light colour of this fawn-coloured variety of cat, therefore, has given rise to the idea in your question. 6. It is needless to add that the Members of the Royal Family are not accompanied on their journeys by a pair of these cats, nor are there any at the Siamese Legation. The ideas have simply arisen from the fact that the Siamese generally are fond of animals, cats included. I am, etc., H. Warrington Smyth.

PERSONALLY, whilst preserving an open mind on the matter, we should not regard this evidence as conclusively robbing the Siamese of his extra-feline prerogatives. We repeat, a Legation official is not necessarily omniscient, and in this case, the Secretary

being apparently an Englishman, it might well be that he was genuinely ignorant of much lore connected with this breed. We simply quote his remarks as doubtless of interest to many fanciers of to-day who never heard of them. When, a year or so ago, we applied to the Secretary of the Chinese Embassy for information as to the Drop-Eared Cats, not only had they never heard of them (although they have certainly been often enough referred to, even if mythical, by writers of all nationalities!), but also rather strenuously denied that they, or any cats, were ever eaten in China, which surely is established. Yet the Chinese Embassy official, being a native, might be expected to be more acquainted with such matters than an English official.

A GOSSIP ON BLUE SHORTHAIRES.

BY MRS. CAREW-COX.

IT IS now considerably over 40 years since I first possessed a Blue Shorthair (her former owner declared her to be a Siamese!). "Dwina" won many prizes, and lived for very many years. She was of foreign type, long-bodied, snakey-headed, emerald-eyed, and whip-tailed. She had a peculiarly close coat, even in colour throughout. At that time there were no classes for Short-haired Blues, so this breed of cat had to be entered in the "Any Variety." Since those far-off days the British Blue has put in an appearance, the exact reverse in points to the original blue—round-headed, golden-eyed, compact in shape, shorter in tail, and usually much lighter in colour. Shorthair Blues of foreign type (usually called Russians) exist also in Norway, Iceland, and some parts of the United States. Many years ago Blues with faint markings were imported from the North of Norway; these were called "Canon Girdlestone's breed." I owned two of them. I also had a lovely blue and white (Kola) from the North of Russia. Since Blues have become better known they are now very popular; they present a smart tailor-built appearance all the year round, and possess the very great intelligence always to be met with in shorthairs.

A DEAL IN MUTTON.

Before I owned Kola she had changed hands more than once, and was exchanged at the London Docks—for a leg of mutton! I have owned very many famous winners and bred innumerable kittens, but their names and their many show successes would not now interest exhibitors of comparatively mushroom growth. Amongst the many cats I have owned (including many rescued strays) not one pet is forgotten, the remembrance of them has never failed—

"It would lighten half my pain
 Could I think we'll meet again
 Beyond the veil."

CATS IN ITALY.

BY GEORGE DE SOUTHOFF, C.M.Z.S.

IN ITALY there are only common short-haired cats of every colour: tri-coloured she cats are common. In Rome the neuter cats are sometimes very big, as big as the Russian cats (I mean the common ones of North Russia—I am a Russian myself). There are in Italy some poor strains of L.H. called Angora, those with eyes of different colours (hazel and blue, for instance) are most prized. In Sicily we find short-haired light or deep greys (blues), which came from Malta. Some pedigree L.H. and Siamese have been brought in, chiefly from England. Venetian red cats are orange tabbies, or such with white markings, the same which in Southern France (Provence) are called Spanish cats (chats d'Espagne), and which may very likely be descendants of Spanish cats. As in England, we find in Italy both long-nosed and snub-nosed cats, both forms are inter-bred indiscriminately. No cat shows—except small insignificant ones as side-shows to canine exhibitions—no cat clubs, no cat breeders, though many cat lovers.

There is a great deal of confusion in the terminology of cat races: for instance, what I call Carthusian is the L.H. Alpine strain with short nose and small rounded ears, which may have originated at the Carthusian Monastery, near Grenoble (La Grande

Chartreuse). Carthusian cats are spread over the Alps of France and Switzerland; I have already told you of the cats of this race I found at Viège. Carthusian cats are not, normally, found under 700 metres above sea level. I think they have nothing in common with L.H. Russian cats, which last are of Eastern origin—Persia, Turkestan—and may be derived from the Manul cat.

Gossip of the Week

(CONTINUED).

MISS COCHRANE is very busy nowadays, having again taken over the Dogs' Nursing Home for Messrs. Sewell and Cousins, so has not had much time to devote to the Cat Fancy.

VISITS.

April 18th.—Mrs. Dulton's **Beauty** to Mrs. Campbell-Fraser's **Hendon Alexis**.

April 22nd.—Miss J. M. Fisher's **Kasha of Hadley** to Mrs. Campbell-Fraser's **Hendon Eastbury Boglie**.

BIRTH.

April 20th.—Mrs. Spencer Smith's **Lady Jane**, five fine kittens by Mrs. Kidd's **Ch Tarzan**.

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A REMARKABLE INDIAN CAT.

ONLY a small proportion of present-day exhibitors, we think, will remember the remarkable Indian Red Cat, who created such a sensation on his appearance in 1901. He gave rise to a lot of discussion, and is much of a mystery to the present day, when his skin is, I believe, in the possession of Mr. R. I. Pocock, the former Superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, who is, however, unable to account for him. As a kitten he was one

AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE.

of the most remarkable looking cats we have ever seen. When about four or five months old, his ears looked very large, and, with his very pointed face, gave him almost the appearance of a young fox. His legs were long and slender, his beautiful whip tail would have done credit to a Pointer dog; his coat was extraordinarily short, almost like that of a freshly clipped horse. His colour was a beautiful rich chestnut red, fading into paler tints on the belly, and legs and tail were slightly marked. His forehead was wrinkled like that of a Chow. He was stolen from an hotel in Bombay, along with another kitten, which died en route. This one fell overboard once, and was rescued with difficulty; on another occasion he got into the coalhole on the boat, and was brought up as black as a crow. Arrived in London, he got on the roof of the house, and perambulated the roofs of the East End tenement wailing like a lost soul. He did a good bit

WAS IT TELEGONY?

of winning, and caused a great sensation. Like so many Oriental cats, he would walk perfectly in the street on a lead. These were the days of the "ring classes," and we remember his clearance of the ring on one occasion when another tom was rude to him. On one occasion a cat member of his type, but of different colour, was exhibited by the Hon. Mrs. McLaren Morrison; it was thought to be an Indian Desert Cat, which, however, is quite a different species, and not a domestic cat. We mated him to an Abyssinian queen, and she had a couple of kittens exactly like him, except that they were not so fine in coat. Unhappily they only lived a very short time. Now comes the incident which has made us a believer in Telegony, or the influence of a previous sire. This Abyssinian cat, when we broke up our kennels and cattery in 1904, remained in London, the Indian going to Kent. Some eight months afterwards, the Abyssinian, having mated with some

stray, produced, amongst a litter of blacks and tabbies, one beautiful red kitten the image of the former Indian lover. Such a kitten has never been since observed to our knowledge. How explain this but by Telegony? We are

A MEAN THEFT.

well aware that modern scientists do not recognise Telegony; at the same time the wiser ones preserve an open mind on the question, and we may well here quote Mrs. Veley's words of a few weeks back as regards another matter:—"I think, after fifty years spent in the study of biology, we should not be too cocksure that things cannot happen because they are rare and seem unlikely." In any case, the extreme sensibility of the cat makes it appear to us to be one of the most probable animals to indulge in some such peculiar behaviour, if at all feasible. A beautiful miniature of this cat was painted by the celebrated miniature painter, our old friend, the late Mr. J. W. Bailey, or "Pa" Bailey, as he was affectionately known to dog show frequenters of thirty years ago. At Cruft's Show, in 1902, he passed the case containing this with a number of doggy miniatures around a circle of friends for inspection; carelessly it was allowed to reach the hands of a stranger, and about a hundred guineas' worth of miniatures disappeared, and were never heard of again!



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COON CATS.

THE AMERICAN papers constantly make reference to the "Coon Cats" of Maine, which many writers fatuously maintain to be derived from a cross with the Raccoon. The animal is so distinct from the felines that such a cross is doubtless impossible, and even if it did occur, the resultant progeny would be true hybrids, and sterile. We did, however, imagine it possible that there might be a very strongly marked local race, as distinct from ordinary cats, as, for instance, the Abyssinian from the British cat. We, therefore, consulted our colleague, Mrs. Taylor, of "The Cat Courier," who kindly replies:—"About the Coon Cat: we do not believe in any such animal. Some people incorrectly call our Maine L.H. Cats Coon Cats, but they are really nothing more or less than the Persians running loose and badly mixed as to colours, sort of mixed up brown tabby or A.O.C. Colour." This is what we expected. It is singular that some people, directly they see anything a little unusual, must at once try to explain it by referring it to some weird and wonderful cross. Many years ago Manx kittens were seriously exhibited and notified in the Press as hybrids between Cat and Rabbit!

AN ADVERTISEMENT in the "Telegraph" last week announced that Mr. Ivor Novello had lost his Siamese kitten, which had strayed on the 12th, but on Saturday we learnt that it had been recovered.

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