

## CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 1

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Edited by H. C. BROOKE

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### Gossip of the Week.

THE MANY of our readers who, we are certain, have enjoyed reading the works of "Joan Conquest," will feel an additional zest in perusing her letter on page 4 on a subject which has been a puzzle to naturalists for two hundred years, and which is and must be of absorbing interest to all those broader-minded lovers of the cat who take a wider view of matters feline than that circumscribed one confined to prize-winning only, which, after all is said and done, concerns but a very small proportion of cat lovers. Miss Conquest's latest delightful book, "Forbidden," showed us that the author possessed deep insight into matters Chinese; and an inquiry—addressed almost as a forlorn hope, after the failure of our multifarious inquiries in almost every civilised country of the world—produced the kind reply above referred to.

WE HAVE been prosecuting our inquiries with regard to the possibility of a Civet and Cat, or Viverrine and Feline cross. The eminent naturalist, Dr. J. Buttikofer, for years Director of the Rotterdam Zoological Gardens, but who has now retired and lives in his native place, the charming old-world town of Bern, writes:—"I have never heard of a fruitful cross between Civet and Cat, and cannot believe in the possibilities of it; Viverrines and Felines are of too diverse nature for me to believe it practicable." And Professor E. Bourdelle, of the Paris Natural History Museum, writes us:—"I never yet heard the possibility of a Civet—Cat cross mooted, and am not inclined to believe in it. I would not deny the possibility of a mating between Civet and Cat, but I should certainly not believe in the fecundity of such a mating." In the circumstances it really is a scientific calamity that Mrs. Veley obtained no details and photos of the litter once shown to her as being so bred, the alleged parents being together in the cage; and that no one took notice of the similarly bred litter catalogued at last summer's Vienna Cat Show!

WE WOULD gladly attempt the cross ourselves, but have never yet seen a Civet which did not betray great hatred towards a Cat. Could such a cross be made and perpetuated it might lead to the produc-

tion of animals of very exquisite markings. To us it has always been a mystery that whilst plenty of people devote time, money, and space to breeding deer, waterfowl, etc., no one takes up such a fascinating hobby as offered by breeding experiments with the most beautiful class of animals in existence! Apparently those who would cannot afford it; and those who could afford it lack energy or interest; yet what a fascinating and entrancing pursuit, with what glorious possibilities.

M. G. DE SOUTHOFF, C.M.Z.S., writes from Florence: What Mrs. Oglethorpe writes you as to "tabby" being derived from El Tabbian, seems corroborated by the fact that in Italy tabby cats are called "Soriani," i.e., Syrian cats, both terms pointing to their having formerly been introduced from Syria and perhaps Mesopotamia.

THE "CAT COURIER" says: Mrs. N. Timchenko, New York City, owner of the lovely Siamese female Puma, has sailed for Europe, and plans to bring back with her a Siamese male and two females for Mr. Eric Lang, owner of the Royalton Cattery.

MRS. STEVENS' well-known team of crack Blue studs enters our columns this week.

WE OBSERVE that Sir Rowland Blades, M.P., Lord Mayor of London, speaking at the prize distribution at a Kingston Boys' School, attempted to demolish the Dick Whittington legend by stating that cats were not introduced into this country (from Austria) until two hundred years after Whittington. The "Evening News" very rightly, in a humorous article, demolishes his Lordship's arguments, by showing that the Domestic Cat was the subject of protective legislation in Wales about the year 950, whereas Dick did not appear until about 1400. The "Evening News" then, evidently having access to sources of information unknown to us, states (or, perhaps, this is "writ sarkastik?") that the Cat "led the animals into the Ark, and Jeremiah heard it prowling and crying among the ruins of Babylon. Jeremiah, it will be remembered, came to this country (via Ireland) with the Stone of Scone and a Princess of Israel. The party brought some kittens with them as propitiatory gifts for the Irish Chieftains."

WELL, WELL, we live and learn! But the idea of the cat leading the whole crowd into the Ark clashes badly with the Arabian legend, according to which the Cat was "sneezed out" by the sick lion in the Ark, in order that a check might be kept on the mice!

A BARRISTER (it was said in the Press) has just been fined £10 and £5 costs for pushing a cat off a height of 80 feet!

MISS SEDGEMORE, the well-known L.H. enthusiast of Exeter, has recently entered the matrimonial estate. ANOTHER of the comparatively few West Country Cat Fanciers, Mrs. Elliot, has left Burnham-on-Sea to reside at Nantwich, Cheshire.

WE NOTE that the G.C. will again approach the Railway Companies with a view to getting them to grant to Cats the privilege of returning from shows at half-rate, which all other classes of exhibition live stock enjoy, except mice and rats. We hope they may be successful, but doubt it. When the Railway Companies first granted this concession, there is no doubt they meant it to apply to all classes of live stock. It was clearly "up to" the parties negotiating with the Companies on behalf of the Fur Fancies to make sure that **all classes were definitely included**. We noticed at once the omission of Cats and Longtails, and wrote immediately to the negotiating parties (we are not referring to the G.C.) urging that they at once take steps to have the omissions rectified. No notice was taken, and it was not until some weeks later, when we had sent some stock to shows at the new rates, and been surcharged full rates for their return when the Companies' monthly accounts were prepared, that our second letter received attention, and the Clearing House was again approached. We ourselves wrote strongly to the Railway Clearing House, as did the authorities of the Longtail Fancy. But it was too late, the Railways (doubtless thinking it was no part of their duty to make sure all classes of stock were included, and that if those negotiating on behalf of the Fur Fancies were not sufficiently wide awake to look after the interests of **all** its branches) refused to again alter their regulations, and we doubt if they will now feel inclined to do so.

CROYDON NEWS.—The judges for next show will be: Mrs. Stephens, L.H. Blues; Mrs. Forsyth Forest, Reds, Creams, and Torties; Miss Adams, Chinchillas and House Pets; Captain Powell, Blacks and Whites; Mr. House, Silver and Brown Tabbies, Smokes, Abyssinians; Mrs. Cran, Siamese; other S.H., Dr. Alder.

MRS. LANGSTON is organising a Concert for the C.C.C. to be held on October 10th. Miss Hill-Shaw is, we regret to hear, suffering from a bad throat.

## THE CHINESE DROP-EARED MYSTERY.

By "JOAN CONQUEST."

Author of "Desert Love," "The Hawk of Egypt," "Forbidden," etc.

IN reply to your inquiry as to the Drop-Eared Chinese Cat, I wish I could help you, but, unfortunately, I have never come across such a cat in China. I did, however, see a mural painting in, I think, the Central Provinces, of a panther or maneless lion with just such ears. A big beast, crouching on a bough and snarling. But just where I saw it I do not remember. I remember saying to my "boy" (who is the original of the Wan Yen in "Forbidden") that the animal had "broken" ears. That seems rather like the beast referred to in The Catalogue of Carnivora,\* doesn't it? I will write to my friend, Dr. Giles, of the British Museum, and ask him if he knows anything about the actual cat. His father was **the** Giles.

I expect you know about the beautiful long-haired present-day Chinese Cat. Very difficult to get hold of. One puts one's name down for a kitten as one does for a club over here. A treacherous beast it is, too.

(\* A Catalogue of Carnivorous Animals in the British Museum. Gray, about 1860.)

NOTE by EDITOR.—Although not containing the hoped-for information, Miss Joan Conquest's letter is the most informative reply we have received to our inquiries about the Drop-Eared Cat, made all over the world. If it does nothing else, it at any rate does definitely lift the drop or hanging-eared feline out of the category of mere travellers' tales. We now ask ourselves "Was the story of such a cat, repeated by almost every naturalist since the days of Buffon and Brehm, based upon this, or similar Chinese paintings, of an imaginary or mythical animal; or did these paintings represent an animal which really existed even if now unhappily extinct as the Dodo?"

## BIRTHS.

May 3rd.—Miss H. Hill-Shaw's **Paulmiski of Cademuir**, two perfect Maux males by Miss Kent's **Eubonius**.

May 6th.—Miss Hill-Shaw's **Dora of Cademuir**, five lovely kittens by Miss George's **Flick-a-Maroo**. (Prematurely, owing to a storm).

April 12th.—Miss L. M. Jeffries' **Gentle**, five Siamese kittens, by Mrs. Watson's **Beauty Boy**.

April 24th.—Major E. S. Woodiwiss's **Woodrooffe Adwing**, 6 kittens by Mrs. H. Basnett's **Croham Bois-Bois**.

NOTE: Births and Visits, 1d. a word; 2/6 for 36 words.

WE REGRET that only two fanciers have sent in their story of "Why I joined the Cat Fancy," and it cannot be said either of these narratives is wildly exciting! This lack of interest is somewhat disheartening!

## LONG-HAIR LORE.

By MRS. CAMPBELL FRASER.

MISS SYBIL BEAVEN, whose prefix is "Greyfriars," and who is a West of England Fancier, was much missed from the Shows last season owing to a run of ill-luck. She had the misfortune to lose her beautiful blue queen "Yum-Yum." Now, however, she is hoping for a change of fortune, and is looking forward to a litter of blue kittens in a few days.

I met Miss Shervinton the other day, and was much interested in the description of a short-haired black cat to be found in Archangel. These cats stand high on the leg, are intensely black, of a large size, and most intelligent; one, kept as a pet and brought to England, rescued a canary from a stray cat, bringing the bird to its mistress unhurt.

Mrs. Eric Nathan is, I hear, kindly undertaking the "up-to-date" edition of the Stud Book.

Mrs. Lawrence has acquired a handsome maiden queen, bred by Miss Jessie Langton, registered as "Sprite of Argovie."

By a printer's error the following names were omitted from the notice of the S.C.C.C. Annual General Meeting: Mrs. Yeates, Mrs. Sharman, Miss Yorke, Miss Campbell Fraser, Mrs. Bazeley. I may mention that our excellent Hon. Treasurer of the Club, Mrs. Yeates, came as a special favour to myself; she was feeling extremely ill at the time.

Mrs. Kennaway is just off for a short motor tour through the Cumberland district.

Mr. A. Freeman has two very good Blue Persian female kittens, by Blue Craggie and Araminta of Allington; Araminta will be remembered as the mother of Ch. Prudence of Allington, whom Mr. Freeman bred. "O' Hana-San," his other queen, is one of the best headed Blue queens I know, and has had some A1 kittens.

Mrs. Sharman 'phoned yesterday to say her 3-weeks-old Chinchilla kitten, by Ch. Langherne Felix, ex her winning queen, "Frolic," weighs 13ozs. This, I should think, is a record for a Chinchilla.

The Misses Langton are spending a delightful holiday at Ventnor. Mrs. Herbert, Parkstone, Dorset, has bespoken the best female kitten from the litter of their Blue Persian queen, "Wuffy," by Ch. Billy Bumpet. Mrs. Herbert hopes to be fortunate and procure another "Constant Nymph."

The Annual General Meeting of the B.P.C.S. will take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on May 19th.

My telephone No. is Hendon 1,019. I shall be always pleased to hear from Fanciers.

G. C. F.

## THE CAT IN EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY.

By ARMAND STEENS.

(Continued from No. 22.)

From "Chasse et Pêche" (translated by H.C.B.).

THE Goddess Bast, the Cat Goddess—whom the friends of the cat yet to-day adore in the person of her graceful feline incarnation—although a deity of the second class, as but fitting in the case of the patron deity of a town of secondary importance such as Bubastis—yet had certain powers, which men were wont to invoke as they did those of the greater gods. In the existence of the goddess, there occurred one day a dramatic incident which might have become a tragedy, had not the great god Thoth provided her with an efficacious talisman. During one of her wanderings she was stung by a scorpion, and saved by the incantation which Thoth had taught, and which summoned the Sun God Ra to her immediate aid. Since then, on a mortal being stung by one of these venomous scorpions, he would make use of the charm and re-enact the drama of the Divine Cat, thus cured of the sting. (Vide Moret, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*.) He would call out:—"O, Ra, come to aid thy daughter whom a scorpion has stung when on her lonely way. The poison runs in her veins and she applies her lips to it. But Ra has said 'Fear nought, my noble daughter, see, I am with you. I drive back the poison which courses through the limbs of the Cat!'" He who thus repeated the correct formula obtained the succour of Ra, who thus saved again the Divine Cat in the person of him who, by use of the incantation, had put himself in her place. . . . The Egyptians armed themselves with talismans, preferably in gold, the king of metals, the solidified ray of the divine sun. They fortified themselves also by repeating incantations. But the best effect was obtained by combining talisman and incantation, and thus we possess a number of little steles in granite and basalt, engraved with magic formulae. Such an one is the Metternich stele, on which is engraved the Cat incantation mentioned above. Sometimes the matter was simplified by providing one's self with little magic wands of ivory, ornamented with a cat's head, to preserve the bearer against the attacks of scorpions during his travels. In the house, the cat of flesh and blood, incarnation of the tutelary goddess, watched faithfully over the household whilst protecting it from marauders, and in the tomb, the amulets, the steles and magic wands, bearing the heads or figures of cats, were placed in numbers to enable the Soul of the Dead, his "double" or "Ka," to combat the scorpions met during his voyage, beset with perils, towards the Jalous Fields, the dwelling places of the Dead.

## CONTINENTAL CATDOM.

THE newly-formed Société Centrale Féline, with headquarters at Paris, will hold its show in the Salle Wagram, with the concurrence of the older Cat Club de France, on May 27th and 28th. Amongst the judges are Dr. Jumaud and Mr. H. C. Brooke. The organisers have hit on a really splendid idea, enabling novice owners—to which category, of course, most of the French cat lovers yet belong—to enter their cats correctly. The entry form contains in the bottom corner a series of twelve rough sketches or diagrams, with the aid of which no one can well make a mistake. Each sketch bears the description of the coloration, as Self, "Tigre" (mackerel tabby), Tabby, "Moucheté" (spotted tabby), "à cercles"—which is spotted with rosettes in a manner we've never seen a tame cat marked, though we should like to—Siamese, Tortie, Tortie-and-White, and four styles of "irreguliers," or what in the Long-tail Fancy would be called "Broken-marked."

BESIDES the cats, there will be an exhibition of catty paintings, sculptures, books, etc. It is this touch of relief which so frequently causes Continental Shows to be more pleasant and interesting functions than those in this country, and this by no means refers to Cat Shows alone, but to all kinds of livestock shows. *Experto crede!* We have judged at a

goodly number of Continental Shows, in Germany, Austria, and France.

THE S.C.F. will also publish its own catty organ, a Review, to be called "Nos Chats." Yet the Cat Fancy is in its infancy in France! And how long have we been content to do without a cat paper here? Nay, there should be none now, if a certain clique had its own way!

M. ARNAND STEENS writes in our Belgian contemporary the recent proposition to create a special "Belgian" breed of cat, and that this should be the tricolour or tortie. We quite agree with M. Steens when he asserts that in any case this variety of cat would have no claim to be considered as or named Belgian, it being rare in Belgium, though (as we recently remarked) common in many parts of Switzerland. And he goes on very justly to observe that all our ordinary varieties of cats are so mixed and spread all over Europe that it would be idle to attempt to define one special variety as belonging especially to one country, for through the ages, of all domestic animals, the cat has undergone least variation, and its type has remained unaltered. THE FIRST number of "Nos Chats" ("Our Cats"), France's second all-cat paper, is just to hand. This monthly contains 26 pages of illustrated matter. From it we learn that the first cat show in France was held in 1806; and the first French Cat Club was founded by Dr. Jumaud, at Saint-Raphael, in 1913.

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AN ESPECIALLY interesting feature of the Paris Show on May 27th, should be the artists' and illustrators' competition of drawings, etchings, and paintings of all kinds, including covers, title pieces, vignettes, etc., suitable for use in M. Derenne's book, "Mouti, Chat de Paris."

THE S.C.F. is constituting a Legal Council, comprising members of the Bar, Bench, and Ministerial officials, whose services and aid shall be at the disposal of its members in case of need.

ANOTHER artists' competition is announced to be held in the near future, for illustrations to be used in M. Alfred Ruffin's book, the "Livre de Chats" ("Book of Cats"). Also competitions for designs for the cover of the next Show Catalogue of the S.C.F., and for its diplomas. Will no English cat artists compete?

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