

CAT • GOSSIP

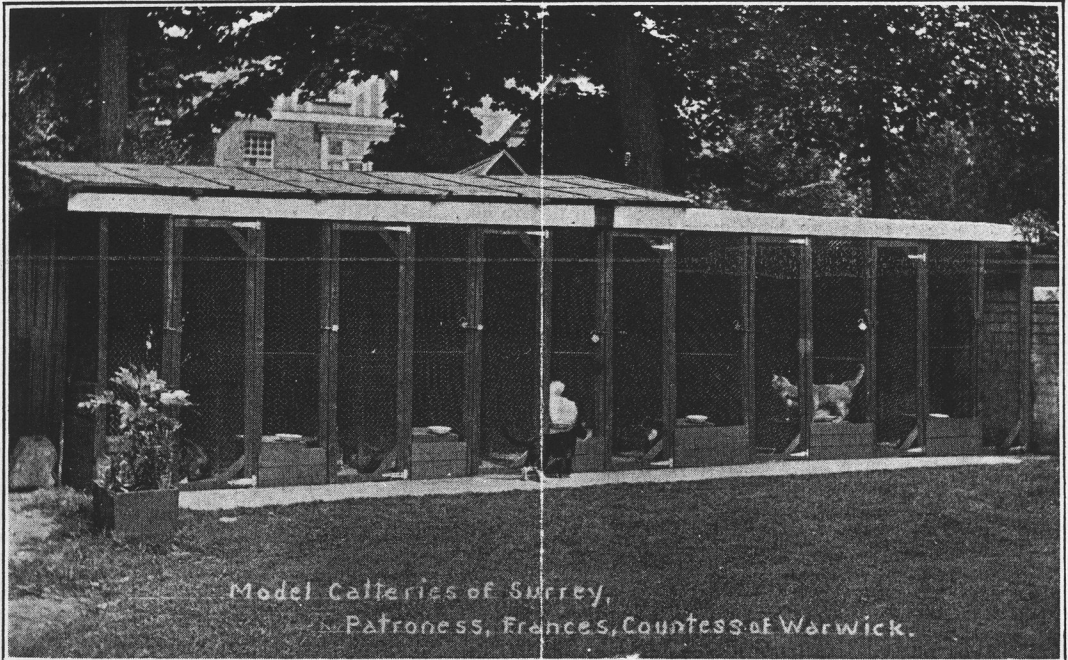
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Edited by H. C. BROOKE

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A PART OF MRS. EGERTON-FREE'S CATTERY AND BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT.

LONG-HAIR LORE.

By MRS. CAMPBELL-FRASER. (Phone: Hendon 1019).

William Gillette, actor and playwright, was born at Hartford, Conn., U.S.A., and is the son of a former Senator of the United States. He made his first appearance on the stage in 1875, while still a student at Yale, and secured his first pronounced success as "Prince Florian," in W. L. Gilbert's "Broken Hearts." In 1901 he appeared at the Lyceum, London, in "Sherlock Holmes," which play he had produced with éclat in N.Y., at the Garrick Theatre of that city, in 1899. This versatile writer has a charming estate in Connecticut, which boasts of a miniature railway of its own, besides other luxuries. Mr. Gillette has a very soft spot in his heart for the cat, and if you stay with him you may be asked to take one of his pets in to dinner! Chairs are placed for the cats, and each has its own bowl. They sit up at the table like little gentlemen, and

after consuming their food they modestly retire. I think one day he must write and tell us all about them in his own inimitable way.

Just before "Heaving the anchor" Miss Hydon wrote a line to tell me of her safe arrival in Liverpool, with her purchase of 14 (cats, kittens, and Pomeranians). A hefty number, indeed, but all happy and contented in most comfortable quarters on board the Laconia (Cunard Line). She broke her number of 13 by adding Hendon Black Sorcerer to her lively family, and I hope he goes to make a name for himself in the States. Good coloured blacks are, I hear, scarce over the water! To fill Sorcerer's vacant home I have bought Hillingdon Dr. Beetle from Mrs. McClure. He is a most gentle fellow, and has filled out to a nice type—very black, with a particularly full round eye. I was glad to procure him as a mate for my Bogie queens. Mrs. McClure is, I am glad to hear, slightly improving in health, and we may have the pleasure of seeing her very soon in her old place at our Ch. Shows.

Sympathy between Cats.—On Mrs. Campbell-Fraser's suggestion that it would interest readers of "Cat Gossip," I have written this account of an incident witnessed by myself early this morning. My two Persian queens both expected kittens last week, and as there has been much jealousy between them I arranged two beds (in the same room), but well apart and screened off. Last Friday the blue cat had five kittens (her first litter), and yesterday evening the tortoiseshell cat seemed unwell. Knowing that she has her families with difficulty I paid her a visit at 2 a.m. I found her lying in the blue Persian's arms, who was purring and licking her face, while at the same time endeavouring to feed the tortie's newly-born kittens, as well as her own three days old family. The tortoiseshell mother was obviously exhausted, and unable to attend to her own kittens' wants at the time. She has, however, now recovered, and is clearly grateful to the other cat for her help, as now she is lying as close to her as she can get to her, although back now in her own basket, where I placed her as soon as she appeared well enough to be moved.

The above touching story of animal sympathetic understanding was sent me by Mrs. J. M. Newton, of Twickenham, and I could not help thinking that her early morning watch at 2 a.m. brought its own delightful reward.

Visit the Natural History Museum, Kensington, by all means if you have time during your visit to London. 'Tis a splendid building, full of the most interesting exhibits of every species. "Darwin and Huxley" welcome you in. What need I say more! But don't, please don't take the one and only blue Persian cat as the representative of her breed. I cannot say what has happened to her, poor thing! But she is like nothing on earth. All her vitality must have been absorbed by the "veteran War Office cat"—a huge fat fellow, tabby and white. He must at least have held the rank of Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. But I was grieved to see he bore no "honourable scars," in fact, so sleek and self-complaisant he looked that I fear he must have crept in as an undiscovered "pacifist"!

The Committee Meeting of the S.C.C.C., held at Auderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, October 17th, 1928, following the quarterly Governing Council Meeting, was a very pleasant gathering, and an unusual pleasure was having our delegate, F. W. Western, in the chair. Those present were Miss Lea, Miss J. M. Fisher, Mrs. Sharman, Miss Kathleen Yorke, Mrs. Yeates (Hon. Treasurer), and Mrs. Campbell-Fraser (Hon. Secretary). Business connected with the running of the Club's Ch. Show was the heaviest item on the agenda, and as Miss Lea had signified her inability this year to fill the post of Show Secretary and Manager, Mrs. Sharman, of Coryton Cattery fame, generously came forward to fill the vacancy. To an embryo show manager the undertaking of the heaviest Show of the year is a very

considerable one, but the Committee felt happy it should be in such capable hands, and promised each and all to help as much as they could in various ways. Mr. F. W. Western was the first to become a guarantor, and voluntary help in this way, or in donations, will be a welcome encouragement to our plucky novice Show manager. Work on the schedule was fully gone into, and many classes revised. The date of the Ch. Show is January 24th, 1929, to be held, as usual, at the Prince of Wales' Baths, Kentish Town. A word of regret crept into an otherwise bright meeting: this was the retirement of Mrs. Sydney Evans from the Committee owing to her inability to attend meetings, her home now being in the West of England. Mrs. Thompson, 4, Pensford Avenue, Kew Gardens, was elected to fill the vacancy.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

MRS. EGERTON-FREE is so well known as a self-sacrificing worker on behalf of the cat, submitting herself to all kinds of unpleasantnesses in the effort to alleviate feline suffering, so often ignored by owners of "fancy stock," who too often act the parts of the Priest and the Levite—that we feel sure no one sending a cat to be kept at her boarding establishment, part of which is shown in our illustration, need doubt that every possible kind attention will be lavished upon it. Mrs. Free does a lot of "lethalizing" of the unwanted, and some of the sights she sees are heartrending, and a poor testimonial for our vaunted civilisation. She has a "stray" pen, open day and night, for the reception of these poor creatures, victims of the callousness, if not downright cruelty, of "God's noblest creation" (?).

MISS OLDFIELD HOWEY is guaranteeing a class for Polydactyles at Worcester, where these curious "freaks" will doubtless greatly interest the visitors.

QUITE unofficially, we should think the reply to Miss French's question as to Mackerel Tabbies is, that their markings would not show to advantage in L.H. A S.H. mackerel may be very beautiful, but we think no one will deny that no L.H. can display markings to such advantage as a S.H.?

MESSRS. SHERLEY AND Co. inform us that already about 150,000 copies of their excellent little booklet, "Hints to Cat Lovers," have been sold in the short time since it was first published. It certainly is a most useful booklet, and an excellent threepenny-worth. We do not want here to indulge in what our respected confrère "in another place" would call a "homily"; but at the same time Messrs. Sherley's statement makes us think. We may take it that these 150,000 applicants for the book are all Cat lovers; the ordinary person who just keeps a cat to catch mice and be mauled about by the kids wouldn't trouble to buy a booklet about it. The unlucky cats such people keep are expected to live on mice and sparrows, with what they can get out of the dustbin,



and on their lucky days perhaps a kipper off the neighbour's breakfast table; if such cats are ill they are turned out, or drowned. Now, even supposing there were no other cat lovers besides the 150,000, has the Fancy a proportionate number of members? We trow not. The few hundreds that may be counted as fanciers or (even occasional) exhibitors, are but a tiny fraction of those thus proved to be interested in cats! There must be some reason why we are not a progressive Fancy. What can it be? Something calls for improvement!

If arrangements can be made for a gramophone, we intend letting visitors to Croydon hear the record of Peter Alupka, the late "Talking Cat." To hear him keep rhythm and tune when he accompanies his mistress in the old song, "Ich hatte einen Kameraden," is screamingly funny.

"PETS," our beautiful American contemporary, has much to interest us this month. An article on White Cats is by the late A. E. Field Marshall, the well-known American judge and fancier, who died last month. There is a portrait of Miss J. M. Fisher's Ch. Ivanhoe of Hadley, and some interesting remarks on Mrs. Egerton-Free's work on behalf of cats, and what is less known, on behalf of horses. This sort of work, strange to say, is absolutely ignored by the British Fancy Press, though it is allotted space in the Fancy papers of every other country we know.

CATNIP—do cats care for it or not? is still perplexing many writers. We think, from what we hear, it's a matter of personal taste—some ignore it, some go mad after it—just as a perfume which one person likes may not appeal to another. Mrs. Fitzgerald has sent us one of the "Catnip Mice," made by a firm in America, and recommended especially as playthings for cats which do not get much exercise. Our pet Abyssinian promptly seized it and romped for an hour with it.

WE feel sure the S.C.C.C. have made an excellent choice in appointing Mrs. Sharman their Show Manager, and that general satisfaction will be expressed. WE are glad to note Miss Richardson has succeeded in producing a cream S.H. kitten. See her advertisement of a cat of curious colour, useful to experimental breeders.

HENDON SORCERER has been withdrawn from stud by our esteemed collaborator, Mrs. Campbell-Fraser. See L.L. for particulars.

THE YORKSHIRE COUNTY CAT CLUB.

The first Show of the Yorkshire County Cat Club was held at Harrogate on October 17th. There were nearly 100 exhibits, and the judging was in the hands of Mrs. Wood, of Brighouse, Miss Burton, of Ossett, and Miss George, of Malvern. The principal awards were two beautiful silver cups and a magnificent gold medal. The Langherne Challenge Cup, kindly presented to the Club by Mrs. Aubrey, of Worcester, to be held for one year by the exhibitor of the Best

Kitten under nine months, exhibitor to also be the breeder, and in addition to be a member of the Yorkshire County Cat Club; this was won by a lovely blue Persian kitten, the property of Mr. George Bolton, of Keighley. The Challenge Cup, presented to the Club by Mrs. T. W. Adam, of Walton Wakefield, to the exhibitor of the Best Male in Show, any colour, winner to also be a member of the Club, was won by Mr. J. S. W. Budd's cream Persian, Mirza of Bredon, bred by Mrs. Yeend, in Worcestershire. The Gold Medal was for the Best Blue Longhair Exhibit in Show, either male or female, and was won by Mr. Budd's female, Arctic Star, who was also Best Cat in Show. This was presented by Mr. Lawson Atkinson, of Manningham, Bradford. Cats sired by Flick-a-Maroo were well to the fore, Mrs. Yeend's Don of Bredon winning in the longhair blue males, whilst Mick of Montavon, owned by Mrs. Bradley, of Harrogate, and sired by the same cat, was second. Arctic Star, the winner of the blue females, is a beautiful daughter of Flick-a-Maroo, bred by Miss Grayton, of Huthwaite, near York. The cups and specials were awarded by the three Judges, and the Club wish to express their thanks to them, and also to their Stewards, and especially to Miss Joyce Fair, who made the long journey from Tewkesbury to steward for Miss George. There was a good attendance for a first Show, and the event can be considered in every way to have been a great success. The Show closed at five, and by 5.30 every exhibit was safely on its way home.

AWARDS.

BLUE, M. L.H.—1, Yeend; 2, Bradley; 3, Bolton. BLUE, F.—1, Budd; 2, Bolton; 3, Dodgshun. BLUE BREEDERS—1, Bolton; 2, Yeend; 3, Brown and Wilson. A.O.C., M. or F.—1, Budd; 2, Ripley. ADULT, S.H.—1 and 2, Kuhnel. A.V., Household Pet and Neuter 1, Budd; 2 and 3, Grimshaw. BLUE L.H. KITTEN, 3 to 6 months—1, Gill; 2 and 3, McNulty. BLUE, M. or F., 6-9 months—1, Brown and Wilson; 2, Bolton; 3, McNulty. A.O.C., M. or F., 3-6 months—1 and 3, Gilbert; 2, Budd. S.H. KITTEN, under 9 months—1, Margerison; 2, Kuhnel; extra 2, Woollin; 3, Kuhnel.

THE PROBLEM OF THE "STRAY."

(By Capt. MacDunn, Assist. Secretary R.S.P.C.A.).

(Continued from Page 439.)

Turning cats out at night is another fertile cause of loss. The animal, particularly if the night is wet and cold, will travel far to secure warmth and cover, and small wonder if it fails to return. Turning out at night in hot weather, incidentally, is about as bad—at any rate, so far as country cats are concerned—for at no period of the year is the animal more in the mood to hunt, and the "gin" and the gamekeeper take their toll accordingly.

The far too common custom of leaving cats behind when owners go on holiday, adds to the legion of the lost, and in regard to this matter a double form of ignorance is shown.

Some people turn their cats **out** of the house when they go away (thereby committing a legal offence), and trust to luck and the kindness of neighbours for

the animals' food supply. Others, equally stupid, lock their cats in, under the misapprehension that they will feed themselves on mice. A well-fed cat will, of course, catch many more mice than a starving one, and to shut such a company-loving creature into an empty house is a form of cruelty of its own.

There are many other contributory causes of the Stray Cat problem, and the question agitating all real lovers of the animal is how to solve it.

The remedy appears to be a two-fold one—legislation and education.

More than once Bills have been drafted for the licensing of cats, which would appear to be an excellent idea, but there are difficulties in the way. The licence fee, for instance, would have to be very small in view of the popularity of the cat as a poor person's pet; and the cost of collection has proved in the past a serious obstacle. Then the difficulty of identification and control appears—the cat, unfortunately for itself, being a climbing animal, and not a running one like the dog.

Without some system of licence, however, it is difficult to see how the problem of "strays" can ever be adequately tackled.

Much can be done, however—in fact, a great deal is being done—to educate people as to the habits and proper care of the cats they possess. The R.S.P.C.A., The Cats' Protection League and other Societies, issue publications on the subject, or supply speakers, lantern slides, and films; run Cats' Homes, Dispensaries and Clinics where advice is given free, and so on; but infinitely more is wanted.

Cat Shows in villages, towns, and cities, where the animals are judged, not on breed alone, but on their condition, and what their owners know about them, would help immensely. Lantern lectures in poor and "Cat-riddled" districts would be popular and useful. The establishment and advertisement of lethal chambers in sufficient numbers throughout the country, and the general development of the R.S.P.C.A. Free Veterinary Advice scheme, would prevent much of the suffering to cats which now exists.

All this, however, means money and interest in plenty. The execution of these schemes can be, and is, to a certain extent, carried out by the big Humane Society and the smaller institutions, but the good they do in this direction is limited, of course, by the funds and support given them.

It is in this direction more than any other that the Breeder, Exhibitor, and Retailer could help so much. If their influence, their technical knowledge, and their varied experience were placed freely at the disposal of the "common or garden" cat owner and the people who are trying to help him and his animal, the disappearance of the "stray" as a type would be greatly hastened.

FERGUS MACCUNN.

BIRTHS.

October 19th.—Mrs. Kidd's smoke queen, Nanette of Downside, 5 kittens by Owner's Ch. Tarzan.

We count ourselves privileged in being able once more to present our readers with one of Miss Northcote's delightful pieces of work, which must be counted as being in the very front rank of catty literature. Older readers will remember that exquisite piece of prose, breathing the very spirit of the Cornish Moors, entitled "The Witching Hour"; the pathos of "Silver and Gold have I none"; the splendid poem, "The Railway Cat"; and the humorous verses, "The Elopement," betraying such a deep insight into feline nature. There is much pathos and beauty in "A Twilight Sketch," which we know full well will appeal to many of our readers, and when the time comes for a feline anthology to be published we are certain the works of this gifted writer, who is also a keen humanitarian, will not be omitted.—Ed.

A TWILIGHT SKETCH.

BY M. A. NORTHCOTE.

A low dark interior, lighted by one of those small cottage windows filled with pots of geraniums, which serve to screen still further the ingress of light. Two old people, husband and wife, and two pathetic jaded white cats, mother and son.

The younger cat, thin, weedy, and stone deaf; the older, once a beauty, now a mere skeleton; her white fur yellow with age, her poor little face blotchy and unsightly, her frail legs bald and patchy—both animals fit subjects for the lethal box.

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But it is summer, and poor little "Madam" creeps out and sits in the sun, diligently washing her shrunken limbs, and titivating generally, with the delicate vanity of past days, when she was a dainty bit of white fluff; and Bobby, poor deaf Bobby, roams farther afield, up into the old quarry behind the cottage, in hopes of mice; though his hunting powers are sadly handicapped by his affliction, and his vitality is low, owing to insufficiency, or, more correctly, inadequacy of food.

The birds sing in vain for him, and he hears no thrilling rustle in the long grass; the approach of danger is notified to him by sight alone; he has learnt, by painful experience, to avoid the precincts of the cottage on the other side of his own bit of garden; that place of flying clods and "seats" of water, and horrid yells, unheard by this poor creature living in a silent soundless world, and exposed to many dangers and trials easily to be avoided by those of keen hearing. At night, winter and summer, the fragile pair fare forth to sleep in the hen-house, or wherever they choose. Madam has been found croodling her shivering form up against the warm white feathers of a Wyandotte hen. It is vain to suggest keeping in at night; they always **have** slept out, as cottage cats, alas, so often do, and they **must**—till death removes them from the place they knew; and the hen-house is, happily, cob-walled and warm. Bobby might do something towards keeping his aged mother warm, but he is a gentleman rover, for all his infirmity, and there is no counting on his home-keeping at night, so Madam makes up to the White Wyandotte.

It is vain to suggest the lethal. Madam can still cat, and creep in, slowly and stiffly, from the hen-house of a morning, so the time is not ripe; the old couple will not hear of it; and Bobby was a great favourite with Jackie, the son, who has gone to Canada, and Bobby must on no account be "put away."

The air is warm just now, and poor old Madam takes sun-baths all day long, till her delicate skin glows red and scorched through the scanty fur, and the warmth sends a glow of vitality through her skeleton frame.

Daintily, leisurely, she washes her yellowed fur, and bare fragile limbs, without a notion that she is no longer the young beauty of earlier days.

Softly, caressingly, she rubs her poor scabby face in the hand of a friend who brings her nourishing dainties from time to time, without an idea that it requires any effort to suffer the well-meant caress. Aged and ugly, she is still sweet; how repel her gentle gratitude?

Bobby no longer flees in terror at the sight of a stranger—he knows the face and hand of a lover, though no voice may ever grow familiar to his ear.

The May is coming into bloom, the young birds will soon be taking their first flights—alas! a joyous time in the cat world. There is soft warmth in the sunshine, and the cottage garden lies beneath the tower-

ing old quarry at the back, so that it is sheltered from some of the harshness of the spring winds.

The tall old man potters about round the hens and the bit of garden; the old wife comes to the door to admire the glowing tulips, blooming gloriously in this dim and drowsy corner of the world.

A gentle melancholy broods like a misty twilight over the cottage, folding the old folk, the frail white cats, and even the sheen of the tulips in its quiet embrace.

It is the evening, the late evening of life for the old couple, and the aged white mother cat with her afflicted son; and there is always a little sadness about the eventide.

The night of death is drawing near. A little while and the garden will know the old people and the shabby white cats no more.

The cottage will shelter newcomers, the flowers bloom for younger generations; and those who are there now will pass silently, softly from the remembrance of those who dwelt in the grey, winding village.

Yet in that Infinite cloudless Memory, in which past, present, and future merge into the Eternal Now, that Mind of the Creator, in which the song of the first bird thrills us when it broke upon the pristine dawn, they will live for ever and for ever. Not one, even of His Lower Creation, ever forgotten.

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All correspondence re "CAT GOSSIP" to the Editor.

H. C. BROOKE.

Bishop's Hull, Taunton.

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