

CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 4

First Edited by H. C. BROOKE

Edited by E. K. WAKEFORD

No. 124

MAY 1st. 1929

Price 3s 6d. quarterly, post free

LONG-HAIR LORE.

By Mrs. M. ESTELLE OGLETHORPE (Tel.: Wimbledon 2889).

"There is no love quite like the love of a cat."

"I believe . . . that the most savage animal has a capacity for love which has not been sufficiently noted, and which, if more intelligent attention had been directed upon it, would have raised them to the status of intellectual animals as against intelligent ones, and, perhaps, have opened to us a correspondence which could not have been otherwise than beneficial."—"The Crock of Gold," by James Stephens.

Yesterday I had a surprise visit from Miss Ridley, who, with Miss Peake, is so well known as the breeder of lovely blue Persian kittens, the name Speedwell standing for beauty and high ideals in breeding. Twinks, the well-known blue queen, has presented her owners with two male and two female kittens by Son o' Flick, and Twinkletoes is in kitten to Ch. Gentleman of Henley, whilst Bramble has visited Ch. Colneside Billy Bumpet. Twinks as a rule presents her owners with males, but when she does have females they are always exceptionally good, so we may look forward to something unusual on this occasion.

Juno of Hawkhurst, after having every opportunity given her of a lovely family has once again evaded her responsibilities. Her owners boarded her for a month at the famous Colneside Cattery, where she had her choice of any of the famous studs who dwell there. But no. The lady came home as she went away, and had not been there many hours before she was found in the stables with the gentleman of her choice, a black and white personage, who had never been seen before in the neighbourhood, and must have come miles to greet her. There is something very strange about our little queens, something that is quite beyond our comprehension. Have they an invisible wireless service that they are so easily able to establish communication between one another over great distances?

April and May are the best months for our pets to have their families, so that the young kittens may have the summer before them and can play in the sunshine to their hearts' content. It is wise to make provision for the accommodation of the little mothers in good time. Some prefer a bottom drawer, others a cupboard with a cosy nest therein, but

wherever the bed may be it must have a position where the light is subdued and there are no draughts. It is very necessary to see that queens are free from worms before they are permitted to have a family, otherwise the kittens are bound to be delicate or to suffer from some complaint, the commonest of which is weak eyes. I think on a whole four kittens is a large enough family for any queen to bring up unless she be exceptionally big and strong. Four kittens stand a much better chance of making good progress, as the mother has plenty of nourishment for them, and can give them more care and attention. I always give a big saucer of hot milk directly the kittens are born, and it has never yet been refused. It is necessary that there should be plenty of fresh water close at hand, some mothers preferring it to milk. It is unwise to let the little mothers feed in the bed with her kittens, although it is very tempting not to disturb her when she is so reluctant to have her family. A nursing mother should have four good meals a day, and be in a position, when she is able, to get grass if she wants it. Don't handle baby kittens more than is necessary. The mother herself will tell you when she thinks they are ready for you. She will probably seek you of her own accord, and will tell you plainly in her own language that she would like you to see her babies now.

The news comes from Mrs. Kennaway that Garboldisham Anemone, who has not produced a family for some years, has now presented her owner with two perfect kittens, by Son o' Flick, and great is the delight of their owner.

A very charming letter comes from Miss Joan Buckley, telling all about her pets. There is so much to tell that I must hold it over till next week, for it would be a pity to miss any of the interesting news described therein of this very charming family, at the head of which is Lord MacAlpine of Stand.

BIRTHS.

March 15th.—Miss Richardson's **Mascha**, 5 kittens:

March 18th.—Miss Richardson's **Deare Jane** (tortoiseshell), 4 kittens (1 cream, 3 blue), both by owner's Anton.

April 11th.—4 sons and 1 daughter to **Little Nymph** and **Croham Vichnou**.

April 25th.—3 sons and 2 daughters to **Croham Goona** and **Croham Boi-Bois**.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

News from fanciers, though scanty, is extremely cheerful, and we are glad to have no deaths in infancy to report. Mrs. French writes that Grumps' three kittens by Vicinou are well, and growing nicely, and that Dido and Cora Capps have nine babes between them. Curiously enough, Dido much prefers Cora's children to her own, and will bring them out of the big cat house and through the garden to put them on her owner's knee, explaining what particularly beautiful kittens they are. Five of the youngsters are going to be "all browns," and Mrs. French hopes to show them all later in the year, if they live and do well. She considers the Brown Siamese very handsome, and find that they sell easily.

Mrs. Basnett also sends us news of future winners, for her queen, Goona, presented Boi-Bois with three sons and two daughters this week, all of them very bonny and strong. Goona has never had more than three before, so Mrs. Basnett prepared to retire after the birth of the third—this all happened in the middle of the night—but was called downstairs again a few minutes later by Goona, who was evidently proud of breaking her record, and wanted her owner to see the business through. Mrs. Basnett's other queen, Little Nymph, a winner at the first Club Show in 1924, had four sons and a daughter by Vicinou a fortnight ago, born at the beginning of the cold spell, has now gone to a new home at Wolverhampton, and an older sister is to go to Miss Goddard, at Kelmscott, Glos., as soon as the epidemic which has killed many cats in the district has abated. This young lady is known as "Podge," because in her childhood she used to chew the ears of her brothers and sisters until they left the saucer of milk to her, so that she was like a little pudding in shape. She is now very slim and graceful—though she has not abandoned her ear-chewing habit—and will soon be writing love-letters to Bonzo.

We hear from Mrs. Waber that her six-months-old kitten, George, is continually sneezing, although he is a fine kitten and very saucy, and she asks us to suggest a remedy. We have found that this perpetual sneezing, without apparent cause, is usually a sign of worms, and ceases if an effective worm remedy is administered, though an inhalation of Friar's Balsam will give a certain amount of relief. This has certainly proved to be true in our own cattery, where we have had "sneezy" kittens occasionally, and have cured them by dosing for worms, but we should be glad to hear from readers who have experienced the same trouble. The easiest way to give an inhalation of Friar's Balsam is to put the kitten in a basket on a chair—the kind of chair that has a woven cane seat, with plenty of holes—and to stand a basin of boiling water, containing a little Friar's Balsam, under the chair, so that the kitten breathes the steam. This does not frighten the

"patient" in the least, though, of course, great care must be taken to ensure that he does not sit in a draught until he has cooled down.

Mrs. Ballingall writes this week about a most deserving charity, and we hope that many of our readers may be induced by her letter to send a subscription, however small, to Mrs. Eyres Simmons, so that her pensioners may remain in their present happy surroundings.

THE new headquarters of "Cat Gossip"—we have not yet signed our agreement, but it is only a matter of a few days before we sign—will be within a few yards of St. Alban's, Holborn, the only church, we believe, in which there is a statue of a cat. The cat in question attached herself to the builders, and supervised their work, and so she is immortalised in stone.

THE sad news of Billy Bumpet's death only reached us over the telephone after "Cat Gossip" had actually gone to the printer, so that we could only insert a very brief note last week. We know that all fanciers—and all cat lovers—will read Mrs. Bazeley's account of her favourite with the deepest sympathy.

CONTINENTAL CATDOM.

THE WHITE FANCY IN FRANCE.

We take the following from "Les Tablettes," the organ of the French Fancy:—"The white Persian originated in Asia Minor . . . in our days as a result of frequent crosses the specimens found there are degenerate, and it is in the possession of French, English, and Belgian breeders that we find good specimens conforming to the standard. The name of 'White Persian' should be reserved for selected animals, that of **White Angora** being used to describe L.H. animals not thus selected (or bred by selection). . . . Contrary to the accepted use in Germany and the U.S.A., we hold that specimens with green, orange or yellow eyes should be eliminated from reproduction, and classed amongst Angoras not selectively bred. Amongst the blue-eyed white cats many are deaf, or hear badly; this deafness is the consequence of Albinism accompanied by a degeneration affecting various organs, notably the ear. It is often noticed in white dogs. Pocock* states that Albinistic wild felines (tiger, leopard, etc.) often exhibit a defective or feeble power of sight. As Lecoq has demonstrated, the connection between the two kinds of phenomena is so close that in cases where one of the two eyes has kept its normal coloration the deafness is partial, and only affects one of the eyes. Deafness is also found amongst white cats with eyes of other colours, however in this case the percentage of deaf animals is less."

* R. L. Pocock, the noted naturalist.



It appears to us that this arbitrary division of L.H. whites into Persians and Angoras is sure to lead to muddle. "Persians" and "Angoras" might appear in the same litter. As regards the eye question, this is the first time we have seen it so openly admitted that the blue eye is a sign of degeneration, and at the same time this sign of degeneration is boldly advocated and adhered to as such!

We observe that the same paper appears to despair of keeping up the breed of the Sacred Burmese Cats, unknown in England, and the description and portrait of which we were the first to publish.

To the Siamese tail question our French contemporary contributes: "It is a fact emphasised by the learned Professor Cornevin, to whose authority both breeders and veterinary practitioners must bow, and by Dr. Jumaud, who has examined a large number of imported Siamese, that almost all the Siamese imported present short tails, with nodosity as a racial characteristic. The English breeders simply decided to push the long tail in this breed, our friends the Belgians followed them. We mention that at our Shows no points are given for the shape of the tail of the Siamese cat, for we are not dealers, and do not wish to push one or the other variety."

The real truth—Is, or is not, the abnormal tail a racial characteristic of the Siamese, will, we think, never be proved one way or the other, and will prove a bone of contention as long as Siamese fanciers exist.

We read that in some parts of the Continent the number of domestic cat skins brought to the fur markets equals that of rabbit skins, most being from stolen cats! and that in some parts cat-owners are protecting themselves by shearing a bare patch in the middle of their cats' backs, thus rendering the skins useless to the "collector." The craze for furs is one of the greatest blots on modern civilisation. Recently we saw a beastly perambulator, the apron of which was made of six most beautiful matched spotted silver tabby skins, any one of which would have created a sensation at a London Show. And the daily Press is gleefully reporting how a keeper on an estate in Scotland has recently trapped five Wild Cats, whose skins fetch twelve shillings each. It is more than disgusting!

Our Berlin correspondent, mentioning that many of the mated cats sent to Germany have not bred, rejoices that the queen she herself purchased from "that charming lady, Miss Grayton, who seems to run her cats as a commercial proposition, judging by the low prices she charged me," has six kittens. She also informs us that there is a desire for a universal standard to be adopted by all countries, and is of opinion that English standards should be adopted—which sentiment, with one or two reservations, we quite agree with.

TRAGEDY.

The passing of one of the world's most famous cats. CH. COLNESIDE BILLY BUMPET.

The brightest jewel has fallen from the crown of the Colneside Cattery, and the most lovely, loved, and loving of cats has been laid to rest on his island in the lily pond, where he spent the greater part of his happy life. The island is at the moment covered with primroses and white violets; curiously enough, just as we left him there, the nightingale arrived and started singing. Oh! the pathos of it all! the glorious sunshine, birds singing, everything so full of life, and my precious Billy lying dead! He was the victim of an accident; he jumped on to a box, which fell with him, injuring the lower part of his body, causing a thickening of the membranes, which in turn caused a retention of urine, and so uræmia, of which he died. There is a great consolation in the fact that his end was very sudden, and apparently not too painful. As late as the middle of the day on which he died, he walked all over the orchard with me, sharpened his claws on the trees, and spoke to a little visiting queen through the wire, but after the vet. failed to relieve him he went very rapidly, and died without a struggle. Just fell dead! He was a wonderful cat in every way; no judge ever found a fault. A wonderful stud, passing on his good qualities, his quite exceptional colour, tiny ears, and lovely eyes to his progeny. Not only did his kittens win, but they became winning cats, and I think he was the only existing blue stud who had two full champions to his credit. In the Champion of Champions Class at S.C.C.C. Show, two of the exhibits were sired by him, and one the winner! He leaves behind him at home three beautiful sons, who, we hope, will carry on the good work, and preserve the Billy Bumpet type and colour. Colneside Christopher has already won several 1st prizes, best blue novice at Worcester and S.C.C.C. Show, special for the smallest ears in blue males, and the Ch. Bluejacket of Hyver Challenge Cup for the best eyes. Ch. Colneside Cream Bunne has become Champion of Champions. Colneside Carol, although not shown, sired the lovely Colneside Carols Fairy, best blue female kitten in three Championship Shows. I sincerely hope there will be some of his lovely kittens to come, but there will never be another Billy Bumpet.

"One thing is certain, this life flies;

One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;

The flower that once has blown for ever dies."

Omar Khayyam.

TRUTH P. BAZELEY.

VISITS.

April 21st.—Miss Peake and Miss Ridley's Speedwell Alayne to Mrs. Oglethorpe's The Aristocrat of the Court.

CAT CALLS.

(Publication of letters does not necessarily indicate that they represent our views.)

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Dear Madam,—I have read with great interest the article on taxation of cats, and, unfortunately, it is all too true, as many of us know. Still, I do not think a tax will solve the problem. It means that many a warehouse now giving a really good time to the female cat will adopt poison to keep down rats, and, incidentally, people will be poisoned from rat-infested food. The tax on dogs has not lessened the thousands turned adrift at licence time. What I really should like to see compulsory is the neutering of all males apart from breeding purposes.

Unfortunately there is a terrific sale for cats' skins, and to their shame be it said (in view of the enormous sums given them by animal lovers) big societies sell the skins of the little creatures brought them to be lethally or otherwise. At the same time, just a few of us who have gone in for this work do really and truly see everything is done kindly and humanely. I myself put to sleep over one thousand little unwanted ones, and each one is held and talked to till all fear departs. There is the most hideous cruelty with lethal boxes, and we all know women whose one joy is the "killing of cats," and who have fully developed the killing complex, so that a cat just taking an ordinary walk is snatched up, carried off, and killed. Here they "go to sleep," and I sincerely hope wake up to a kinder world than this has proved for them.

Yours truly,

M. EGERTON FREE.

2, Morland Road, Croydon, Surrey, 18th April, 1929.

THE TAXATION OF CATS.

To the Editor of "Cat Gossip."

I am sure Mrs. Ballingall will give me every credit for the fullest sympathy with her in the matter of improving the lot of the Common Cat—the more so as "Cat Gossip" alone of the English Fancy Press, ever makes the slightest attempt to call attention to their lot, and has never accepted any advertisements from vivisectioners or their agents. This policy is, as I say, confined to "Cat Gossip" in England, but followed by all European cat papers. Having said this, I must proclaim my opinion as being dead against Mrs. Ballingall's suggestions as to taxation. I am not now going to enter into an argument as regards "Cats' Homes"—no doubt there are good and bad, and I believe Mrs. Ballingall's strictures are quite justified in some cases. Numerous Continental towns have tried cat taxation, and dropped it as being futile and costly. To breeders and fanciers it would prove an intolerable burden. The authorities in this country have never adopted, as regards dogs, the fair and reasonable system in vogue in some parts of Germany—i.e., the issue of breeders' or dealers' licences, instead of each individual dog having to be paid for. So there is no reason to believe they would do so in the case of cats. We should require an army of new officials to enforce the tax—result, higher taxation all round—unless the police are to spend their time cat-chasing, and neglect their other duties. Known cat-breeders would have their lives worried out of them; but what good would be done in slums and "mean streets," where cats breed and suffer most? Very little! The people who rear kittens now as toys for their brats would do so then, and take them and drop them a few streets away when four months. A horrible system of spying would be inevitable. The clause 2, allowing no one to have a male cat at large, would be a gross interference with personal liberty, though I personally do not believe in letting male cats run at large. The collar clause would mean very many hanged cats, and many hung up; if wearing elastic safety collars, would slip

them and become amenable to the law. Clause 8 I would agree with, were it not an impossible counsel of perfection. Mrs. Ballingall proposes far more stringent regulations for us than those to which the doggy world is subjected. The persons to be most affected and inconvenienced would be Cat Fanciers, who would receive most of the meddlesome attention of the Inspectors, who would find them more pleasant persons to victimise than those living in districts where "arf a brick" is the favourite argument. It should be a task for the G.C. if ever such legislation be seriously mooted, to oppose it. The only way to attain the ends towards which Mrs. Ballingall rightly strives, is to use every method to teach the public the better treatment of the Cat. This is a matter to which, alas, 99 per cent. of the Cat Fancy is profoundly indifferent, though, were they only farsighted enough to see it, it is a matter which concerns them now, and may do so yet more in the future. But the apathy here! In Germany we have public meetings, "Cat Days," etc., etc. The French, Belgian, and Austrian Fancy Press work to the same end. What is done here? What support has the Fancy or Fancy Press given the Cats' Protection League? I ask: Has the Fancy any thought for cats beyond showing, winning, and selling? Or is that "trade," which was recently mentioned at a G.C. Meeting, the most important thing in their minds? In very many cases I fear the answer must be "Yes!"

H. C. BROOKE.

P.S.—The "detailed record" to be kept, to which Mrs. Megroz refers, is, I should imagine, not very strictly adhered to, and in the case of strayed cats of little use. It would be little use to go to a "Home," where hundreds of cats are weekly destroyed, and see from the record that, say, 25 tabby and white males, 100 ditto females, ditto ditto tabbies, and so on has been lethally! Teach the public in every possible way how wicked and silly it is to rear kittens ad. lib.; that is the only way.



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F. M. B.

What is really the history of the mysterious tortoiseshell? Older works usually refer to them as Spanish. A pair of "Dwarf Spanish" cats, now often shown on the Continent, appear from their photo to be just ordinary tortie-and-whites. Why are tortoise toms almost invariably sterile? Not only in this country has this been noted, but Jumaud, in his "Les Races de Chats" (1926), makes the same observation of a male in Neuchâtel (Switzerland). The Naturalists' Library (1834) refers to a "wild tortoiseshell cat from South America," which was in the Museum at Erlangen. "Its hair was extremely long, soft, and silky. The ground colour is white, but the animal is variously clouded with shades of brown and yellow." Was this a freak, or a domestic cat run wild, or the progeny of such?

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All Foreign News and Exchanges to be sent to the Foreign News Editor, Mr. H. C. BROOKE, Bishop's Hull, Taunton.

All other correspondence re "Cat Gossip" to the Editor and Proprietor,

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