

CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 4

First Edited by H. C. BROOKE

Edited by E. K. WAKEFORD

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LONG-HAIR LORE.

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

Hours fly,
Flowers die,
New days,
New ways,
Pass by,
Love stays.

(Found on an old sundial.)

A delightful story of a Scotch collie, called Hero, and a blue Persian puss, called Fatima, from the pen of that clever writer of charming animal stories, Albert Payson Terhune, occupies the pages of "The Woman's Journal" for this month. Fatima has four vari-coloured babies, and one, a white morsel of felinity, picks Hero as her friend. How the gentle Hero finds himself in his love for this little white Persian kitten, how "Perfect love casteth out fear," and into the brain of the collie springs the command of his fearless ancestors and his more remote forbears, the wolves, when he tackles his fierce enemy, the police dog, in the search for his little friend, who has been taken away from him, makes most delightful reading.

At Max Gate, the home of the late Thomas Hardy, when we visited at Whitsuntide, we found a lovely copper-eyed Persian lying asleep in the sunshine in the garden.

At a verderer's cottage in the New Forest, where we have sometimes called for tea in our rambles, there is to be found a lovely blue cream Persian, who always disappears into the Forest when she finds she is to become a mother, and only comes home again when she is badly in need of food. Poor little thing. She goes away because she knows it is the only way to keep her babies. She is a dear little mother, and how pitiful it is that this trouble should come to her. But she has big families, and it would not be possible to keep all her babies. Although she produces kittens of every description, she yet always manages to have one the replica of her dear little self.

The New Forest is peopled now by herds of wild forest ponies with their foals but a few days old. It is a delightful picture to see them everywhere enjoying a peaceful existence in their perfect surroundings.

On the advice of a friend I have been feeding a little scraped raw beef to Princess Una's kittens, and although they are but five weeks old they thoroughly enjoy it, and I feel sure it is good for

them. They only have a teaspoonful at a time, but I think the increased strength they gain from this is beneficial; it also assists the density of eye colour, which depends so much on health and condition. I think we have all noticed that when our pets are off colour their eyes are off colour, too.

I was most interested to receive a copy of the "Revue Féline Belge" from Monsieur Armand Steens, in which is a charming picture by him, "The Loves of Sadi." Sadi is a fine winning male Persian belonging to Monsieur Armand Steens, and he has as his little spouse Day Dream, whom I sent out some time ago. Sadi and Day Dream have always made their home together, and are the happiest of lovers. It was, however, thought best to separate them, but Sadi was broken hearted, and nearly died, refusing all food and hiding in a corner by himself. So the ménage was restored, and all is happiness once more. The Comtesse Barrachin was most anxious to buy Day Dream, but her owner loves her, and could not bear the thought of consigning her to an unknown future, so she remains in the home where all has been happiness for her. I have not yet had time to read all this charming little paper contains; it is written in French, and only came yesterday, but I read with great pleasure "The Loves of Sadi," and was charmed, and am looking forward to making a study of the rest when I have a quiet moment.

I don't think many breeders are aware that there is a delightful Horse Parade and Pet Show, which takes place every year on Whit-Monday, in aid of the R.S.P.C.A., in The Royal Paddock, Hampton Court, by kind permission of his Majesty the King. The Gold Cup for the Best Persian (any colour) was this year won by Mrs. Sharman's Puck of Coryton, and Mrs. Berry won the Silver Cup for Best Head with Brookside Michael. The late Camperdown's progeny gave a good account of themselves. A blue neuter by him (a female), and longhair blue kitten won 1st prizes and a silver cup, whilst a white female carried off the special for best eyes. I have never been to this Show, which is run by Inspector Bowskin, R.S.P.C.A., and I think it must be well worth a visit in the beautiful grounds of Hampton Court Palace. There is a splendid catalogue, price 3d., and a feature of the Show is that the prizes are given away the same afternoon. On this occasion they were presented by Countess di Monti Ridolphi.

Horses, dogs, rabbits are all to be found there, and I hear Mrs. Berry did well with her Chow Chows, as well as with her cats.

Summer is with us at last, and now the problem to be faced is how to keep cool!

Morning rises into noon,
May glides onwards into June.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

THE lovely weather in which we have all rejoiced during the last week is particularly welcome to those who have litters of young kittens in their catteries. Even though the babies themselves may be still in the nest, the sunshine certainly makes a great difference to the health and happiness of their mother—and of their owner, for going out late on a wet and windy night, to see that all is well in the cattery, is one of the fancier's least pleasant jobs. We are glad to notice that our "Births" column is increasing in length, and that it includes this week the record of eighteen kittens by that fine cat, John of Downside, to whose progeny we wish the best of luck.

Mrs. Dudley Ward is anxious to know whether any of our readers have proved by experience that it is harmful to female cats not to be allowed to mate. It is not possible for her to arrange for her own cats to have kittens every year, without considerable difficulty, and apparently they do not pine or fret, but she would be glad to have her opinion confirmed by others. We ourselves consider that cats vary so greatly in temperament that no general rule can be laid down. Some queens may live placidly all their days without ever having kittens, while others would suffer both physically and mentally if they were denied the opportunity to mate. This is a subject on which the advice of a single-cat owner is more valuable than that of a fancier, since fanciers are only too glad for their cats to have kittens as a rule. We have come across one exception, the owner of two Russian queens, who solemnly assured us that the way to make a profit on Russians was to prevent them from having any kittens, and to concentrate on winning prizes at all the shows—needless to add, this lady was a novice! She happened to be present on the unfortunate occasion when our Cossack disgraced himself by biting the steward—the only time one of our cats has behaved badly at a show—and immediately offered to buy him as a pet, as she was sure that he was ill-treated at home. We felt crushed for several days.

BEFORE this issue of "Cat Gossip" appears, we shall be settled in our new quarters, at 30/31, Brooke Street, E.C. 1; telephone, Holborn 8081. Brooke Street is within a stone's throw of Gamage's Stores, and the 'buses from the West End stop at the end of the street, so it is very easily reached from almost any part of London. If any of our readers are bring-

ing kittens up from the country "on approval," and want to meet a potential purchaser in London, we will very gladly arrange for the interview to take place at "Cat Gossip" Office, and kittens may be left with us while their owners go shopping. It is often difficult to know what to do with a cat in London for a few hours, since they cannot be left at the railway stations, and we hope to provide a solution to this particular problem.

How many of our readers have ever heard of "Murthy's Caitage," we wonder? It is a privately printed book, by Howard M. Chapin; the British Museum contains a copy. It is a sort of Index of Cats celebrated in literature, fiction, or otherwise; as, for instance: Le Chat fin, the cat that fought the devil at Sologne (Champfleury); Long Ear, the cat in the Indian fable of the Vulture and the Cat; Yeuzza, the white cat, surnamed Abu-hareira, or The Father of Cats, for whom Mahomet cut off part of his coat rather than disturb his slumbers; Christobel Colon, the Spanish mascot cat, on the cruiser of the same name, who was taken on board the Oregon at the Battle of Santiago. Many of "Murthy's" references are taken from the 18th century dramatist, Moncrief, several of whose plays had cats as chief characters.

ABOUT Polydactyles, Mr. H. C. Brooke writes us: "The information given Miss Oldfield Howey as to their **origin** is erroneous. I doubt if any Government, however foolish, however desirous of squandering the taxpayers' money, would perpetrate the absurdity of bringing cats from Siberia to a cat-infested country! Even if each such cat caught daily three more rats than an ordinary cat, would the purchase be worth while? But even assuming, for the sake of argument, that this **was** done, the origin of these cats would by no means be accounted for. They exist and have existed in all countries. Thirty odd years ago I showed a Manx with all four feet bearing each four extra digits. It is a 'freak,' and undoubtedly reproduces itself with some pertinacity. Let us be content with that, and not strive, as has been done, to make out that it is a 'provision of Nature,' etc., etc., to enable them to take their prey more easily. Were this the case 'Nature' would seem rather foolish not to thus 'improve' some wild felines, whose existence depends entirely on their power of 'grabbing.' As a matter of fact, in very many Polydactyles the extra digits are practically useless. Far more interesting is the fact mentioned by Miss Howey as to the dropped ear. Apparently another freak, which if it only persisted with age would explain to us the legend (?) of the Chinese Drop-Eared Cat, the puzzle of two centuries. No doubt many properties in various animals were originally such 'freaks'; probably the first canine which dropped its ears out of the normal upright position of the canine ear, was so regarded. Polydactylism occurs in the human race, both on feet and hands, but I've never heard it suggested this was a



provision of 'Nature' to enable the human being the better to do this, that, or the other. Such human polydactylism is heritable, as in the cat, but no one has found it so beneficial that they have striven to found a polydactylous strain of humans. The cat, probably owing to its extreme sensibility, seems very prone to 'freak' formations."

CONTINENTAL CATDOM.

We observe that our Belgian confrère of the Revue Féline Belge is quite of our opinion as to the absurdity, in some breeds, of confining ourselves so entirely to one eye colour that a typical specimen may be set right back on this account. He observes: "In certain varieties—blue Persians and Siamese, for instance—it would be imprudent to admit any other eye colour than that established by the standards . . . but there are other varieties (and here he specially refers to tabbies, tortoisés, and whites) in which this harmony of colours has but a secondary value, and the fact of too strictly insisting on it in this case singularly facilitates the work of an incompetent or mediocre judge, who may automatically throw out the most beautiful specimens simply because their eye colour is not that asked by the caprice of the day."

We observe that Mrs. Bazeley appreciates—as most dog fanciers, but very few cat fanciers do—the value of the publication of really good and clear cat portraits, and is publishing in the Belgian paper the "Cat Gossip" portrait of Colneside Cream Bunne.

The bad weather very adversely affected the attendance at the Vienna Cat Show. The two Manx shown by Herr Lesti, and which Messrs. Van Oppen sent over by plane the day before the Show, as usual attracted great attention from the public, whilst the Abyssinian Ras Tafari greatly interested the many naturalists present.

CAT CALLS.

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

A COLLAR FOR KITTENS.

Dear Madam,—An excellent collar can be made for young kittens in this way: Get patterns (from Cash, Coventry), select a plain lettering, and order a supply of the cambrie tape with your own, or your house's woven name on it. Sew the name, carrying it, on to a piece of good silk elastic, of suitable colour and width. The elastic should fit close to the neck when in its place. Cash's material is strong, though fine and soft, and has a selvedge on two sides. A clever embroiderer could do the work herself—if she could get the same pliable stuff, with selvedges. Ordinary tape is too stiff and harsh. If a kitten, with this collar on, is deliberately stolen, a small reward will generally ensure his return. F. M. BALLINGALL.

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Madam,—Mr. Brooke has taken a wrong impression from my letter. I stated that "I had been assured on

medical authority, that there was no vivisection apart from that authorised by the Home Office. But why does one seek assurance? Because of fear. Because I was afraid for cats, I presumably am not their friend, and they must be saved from me. Is this reasoning right? Certainly not.

I laid the correspondence, literature received, and Mr. Brooke's letter before the said medical authority (he is an animal lover). He carefully perused them, and made the following comment: "One should not lose sight of the fact that to the ordinary person the welfare of the human race is of more importance than that of the cat tribe, and that human lives have been saved by knowledge which could not have been otherwise obtained. As to the partial nephrectomy referred to, there are many people walking about to-day who have undergone this operation, who do not apparently consider that they have been the victims of cruel handling by the surgeons. That licensing is increasing is what one would expect with increasing research. Cambridge, with over 100 licences, is not a fair sample of the British Isles, as it is one of the great centres of research."

To resume, Mr. Brooke's statement that there are only two Inspectors of Vivisection is an argument for increased control of vivisection by the Home Office; in fact, the whole of the correspondence and papers received by me, and hereby acknowledged, are the subject for more careful and increased control of vivisection, by petitioning the Home Office, and representation for this reform in Parliament. Now is an auspicious time for such questionnaire to be submitted to the prospective candidate in view of our support.

I would refuse to have one cat tortured to save me from death, but could I answer that all would be willing for a live sacrifice?

Liverpool.

LILY JARVIS.

THE ABYSSINIAN CAT.

BY H. C. BROOKE

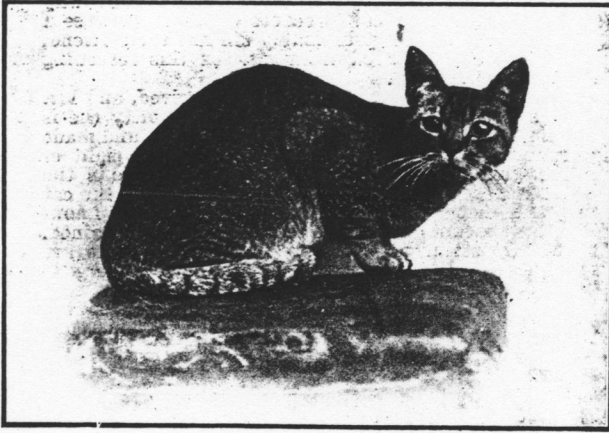
(Vice-President, Abyssinian Cat Club).

(Continued from Page 125.)

At the present day, in the Natural History Museum, is to be found a small Sudanese Wild Cat (*f. ocreata*), of a rusty-red colour, slight in build, with slender limbs, and lightly marked on tail and legs. It reminds one at once of a certain Abyssinian Champion, whose colour is admirable, but who fails in "ticking." In the specimens I have studied, I have been able to observe how the striping in some individuals degenerates into indistinct spotting, the spotting in its turn degenerates in certain specimens into a sort of mottling—an impression also given by some inferior Abyssinians—and then we get the plain unmarked specimens, with more or less ticking. I failed to find any well-ticked skins at the British Museum, but at the great Wembley Exhibition I saw a number of African Wild Cat skins exhibited by a firm of furriers, almost identical with our Abyssinians.

The "foreign" type we prefer in this breed is apt to appear and become more or less fixed in any variety in which we selectively breed with small, slender, and elegant specimens, in preference to those of a cobby or massive build.

In the accompanying illustrations I show the gradations in the African Wild Cat of to-day from the faintly spotted form to the faintly mottled, well-ticked, modern Abyssinian type; and in the papyrus painting, over 2,000 years old, of an Ancient Egyptian Cat, we find the brown body with barred legs and



AFRICAN WILD CAT, Closely Approaching the Abyssinian Type (Female).

(Block kindly lent by "Chasse et Pêche.")

In this specimen there was but slight "mottling," and the "ticking" was very well defined.

tail of the third rate Abyssinian of to-day, the belly being of an ochreous yellow, such as we look for in a brown Abyssinian.

As I remarked above, it has been impossible to obtain details as to the early history of the breed in this country, though surely it should have been possible to ascertain when the breed first received official recognition, when it was first catered for at Shows, who were the first exhibitors, and so forth. Some details as to the early exhibits would also have been of great interest. The earliest reference I have seen is that made in one of the late Dr. Gordon Stables' books, "Cats, their points, etc." (1882). The cat therein portrayed is described as being the property of Mrs. Barrett Lennard, and as having been brought from Abyssinia at the conclusion of the Abyssinian War. The portrait, however, is not instructive, as it resembles no Abyssinian Cat that I have ever seen, but I judge this to be due to poor colour printing. In the quaint "Book of Cats" (C. H. Ross, 1867) no description is given, but we find this statement: "In Abyssinia cats are so valuable that a marriageable girl who is likely to come in for a cat is looked upon as quite an heiress."

When The Cat Club was doing its best to ruin The National Cat Club, nearly thirty years ago, it dropped the title of Abyssinian from its Register, and inserted instead "Ticks." At that time what we must call "British Ticks," often also known as "Bunny Cats," were far more common in various parts of the country than they are now; these cats were usually as well ticked as any Abyssinian, though some had a "mottled" appearance. Mr. Louis Wain was very fond of them, and obtained for me two or three nice specimens from various parts of

the country. Their ground colour was usually a dark grey or blackish grey; they had heads of a pronounced "British" type, and heavily barred legs and tails. At that time the Abyssinian seemed to stand in danger of becoming extinct; of the few that existed many were shy breeders, kittens were difficult to rear, and these British Ticks made a useful out-cross. It is remarkable how they crop up in different parts from time to time from ordinary "garden cat" parents; this, I think, is undoubtedly a reversion to ancient type. About five years ago I saw a fine male in the possession of the caretaker of a Public Hall in North London; there is a charming little queen in a cottage near here which appeared in an ordinary mixed litter of kittens belonging to a Taunton draper.

A few years ago an extraordinary and beautiful albinistic form appeared amongst those owned by Sir William Cooke; in these the ground colour was creamy white, but the ears and dorsal stripe showed the rabbit-coloured fur so characteristic of the breed. Unhappily this lovely mutation was allowed to die out, and at present I only know of one existing specimen. The eyes of these cats were blue. To me it is very saddening to think that apathy has been responsible for the loss of several charming varieties of cats, and when we consider how any interesting or pretty mutation appearing in Rabbits, Mice, or Rats is eagerly fostered, I feel the Cat Fancy has little

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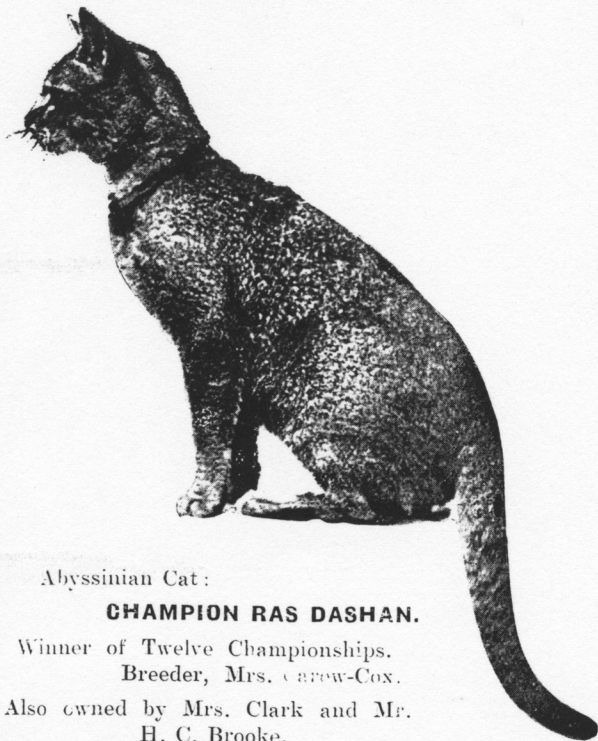
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H. C. Brooke.

(Block kindly lent by "Les Tablettes.")

cause for pride. The fact that this Albinism appeared progressively shows that it was not, as has been suggested, due to a chance Siamese cross.

(To be continued.)

BIRTHS.

April 7th.—Miss Atkinson's **Tortie**, 4 kittens, by **John of Downside**.

April 12th.—Miss Barker's **Fluff**, 2 kittens by **John of Downside**.

May 8th.—Mrs. Buffard's **Sheba**, 3 male kittens by **John of Downside**.

May 9th.—Miss Walker's **Pansy**, 4 kittens by **John of Downside**.

May 13th.—Miss Atkinson's **Pamela**, 5 kittens by **John of Downside**.

April 29th.—Mrs. Carew-Cox's **Melody** (Abyssinian), 5 kittens by **Ras Djibute**.

May 11th.—Mrs. Campbell-Fraser's **Hendon Missy Maroo**, 3 kits to Owner's **Hendon Pish-Tush**.

May 21st.—Miss E. K. Wakeford's **Sea Mist of Bedale**, 5 kittens by Owner's **Peregrine Pickle**.

May 22nd.—Miss E. K. Wakeford's **Thetis of Cleave**, 2 fine kittens by Owner's **Prince Igor of Cleave** (Russian Blues).

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

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