

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. ESTE:LE OGLETHORPE (Tel.: Wimbledon 2889).

In linden-time the heart is high,
For pride of summer passing by
With lordly laughter in her eye.

Swinburne.

In "Some Cats of France," by Agnes Repplier, one reads of Théophile Gautier's pets, of which he has written most entertainingly in his book, "Ménagerie Intime," and amongst whom he numbered cats, dogs, magpies, chameleons, and white rats, but of all these, cats were his greatest favourites, and his devotion to them commenced when he was a little child and owned a big grey cat, who used to bite his mother's legs when she scolded her little son! Of all the pets he ever possessed, his cat, Madame Théophile, was the most beautiful, and he gave her his name to show the closeness of the friendship. She was a reddish cat, with snowy breast and lovely gentle blue eyes and a very pink little nose, and she always slept on her master's bed, and was his constant companion. She was the heroine of a charming adventure with a parrot, of which you may have heard, but which I feel I must repeat on account of its unique humour.

The green parrot came to stay at Théophile Gautier's house whilst its owner was away from home, and the astonishment of Madame Théophile on their first meeting I will tell you in her master's own words.

"Motionless as a cat mummy in its swathing bands, she fixed a profoundly meditative gaze upon the creature, summoning to her aid all the notions of natural history that she had picked up in the garden and on the roof. The shadows of her thoughts passed over her changing eyes, and we could plainly read in them the conclusion to which her scrutiny led. 'Decidedly this is a green chicken.' Having determined as much Madame Théophile leaped from the table whence she had made her observations, and crouched flat on the ground in the attitude of Gérôme's panther, watching the gazelles as they came down to drink. The parrot followed every motion with feverish anxiety. He ruffled his feathers, rattled his chain, lifted his feet nervously, and rubbed his beak against the side of his trough. Instinct told him the cat was an enemy, and meant mischief. Madame Théophile's eyes were now fixed upon

the bird with terrible intensity, and they said in language which the poor parrot distinctly understood: 'This chicken ought to be good to eat although it is green.' We watched the little drama breathlessly, ready to intervene at need. The cat crept slowly, almost imperceptibly, nearer and nearer. Her pink nose quivered, her eyes were half closed, her claws moved in and out of their velvet sheaths, slight thrills of pleasure shivered along her spine at the thought of the repast that awaited her. Such novel and exotic food tempted her appetite. Suddenly her back bent like a bow, and with a vigorous and elastic spring she leaped upon the perch. The parrot, seeing the imminence of his danger, cried in a voice as deep as M. Prudhomme: 'As-tu déjeuné Jacquot?' This utterance so terrified the cat that she fell backwards. The blare of a trumpet, the report of a pistol, could not have frightened her more thoroughly! All her ornithological ideas were overthrown.

"'Et de quoi? Du rôti du roi?' continued the parrot.

"Then might we, the observers, read in the countenance of Madame Théophile: 'This is not a bird; it speaks; it is a gentleman.'"

A message comes from Captain Guy St. Barbe to say that Boon of Culloden, who recently sailed to Australia, arrived in such lovely condition that he was shown immediately on arrival at the Royal Show, where he annexed his first championship and first prize. I am sure we all unite in congratulating Captain Guy St. Barbe on the splendid achievement of this cat of his own breeding from the famous cattery of Culloden.

Mrs. Campbell-Fraser, having purchased a lovely cream kitten from a Bournemouth breeder, is going to make a speciality of breeding blue-creams or blue-tortoiseshells. This charming variety is now coming to the fore, and nothing could be prettier than a well marked kitten of this species.

Jasmine of Farnborough has come home to have her kittens, and looks as if she would have a tremendous family. She has been away from home whilst her kittens were coming, as she is a very temperamental young lady, and is happier where she can have her own room and not see other cats. She really looks most beautiful, and so gentle one could never guess from her demeanour what a quaint little per-

son she can be, and that she must hardly be handled at all, and then only with the greatest circumspection by one who knows her well. She looks a picture of gentleness and placidity, but nothing could be more deceptive. Her angelic looks invite caresses, and sometimes, though rarely, are they welcomed. She is a splendid mother, but must be watched until the kittens are safely in the world. I feel she is a Being from another world, so reserved, so aloof is she, too precious to handle, too aloof to treat as a pet. She was intended for some holy place, and should have a temple built in her honour, with slaves to do her bidding. I would give much to know what thoughts lie hidden behind the inscrutable depths of her wondrous sapphire eyes. . . . "Those sapphire eyes that would not, could not love."

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

WE are glad to hear from many people that kittens, late though they are in arriving, are doing extremely well, so that there should be no shortage of entries at the Shows. It seems likely that the litter classes will be a very special feature of the Kensington Kitten Show next month, since many litters will be of just the right age then, and there should certainly be bumper entries in the kitten classes at Kentish Town next January. In ordinary years quite a number of kittens are just over age in January, and have to be entered in adult classes if they are entered at all, but the majority of this year's kittens will still be under the nine months limit when the next Kentish Town Show takes place. A good many fanciers share our own prejudice against showing youngsters of very tender age, and are much more inclined to wait until they are nearly cats.

Miss Hobbs tells us that Daffodil's five beautiful sons are very much enjoying the warmer weather, scampering in and out of the garden from early morning until midnight, and acquiring huge appetites for fish and cereal. Fuffie, her other Siamese queen, has four kits, twins of each sex, who are now a month old, and are deposited by their mother in the dog kennel each morning to get the fresh air. These two queens are of very different temperament. Daffodil worries dreadfully about her kits and their welfare, but Fuffie is most placid, and is quite indifferent to her children's cries and the visits of strange dogs. Her carelessness annoys Daffodil, who often pushes her on one side and runs to the crying babies, cuddling them until they are comforted. She also objects to Fuffie's habit of dumping her kits on the cold floor, and immediately returns them to their basket. Mixed up with all the Siamese are two Schipperke puppies and their parents, so there are mad frolics in Miss Hobbs' house at times.

ANOTHER fancier who shares her affections equally between dogs and cats is Miss Morant, who has a very busy season ahead of her, for several litters of

both kittens and puppies are expected. She already has a fine litter of Manx, three weeks old, one of them being pure white and extra good, and a litter of five flourishing Blue Persians, now a fortnight old. She has had an anxious time with one of her other queens, who gave birth to three dead kittens and one live one, but the survivor, who is a male, seems to be quite strong and healthy. We are very sorry to hear that Miss Morant has lost her best blue stud, Blue Blaise of Richmond, who was found dead in his house one morning, but she is hoping that one of his kittens will turn out well and will replace him.

Miss Smallwood has taken Miss Oldfield Howey's little bungalow—advertised in "Cat Gossip"—and has just moved there for the summer. The journey to her new quarters must have been a difficult one, for she took all her cats—the Siamese, Princess Souri; a blue queen, Patsy, with four babies a fortnight old; another cat with two orange babies the same age; a black neuter; and Patsy's year-old daughter, Stella. The last but not least important member of the family is the spaniel, Betty, who is very friendly with all the cats and kits.

THE following cat story was contributed by a reader to the "Evening Standard": "Each evening as the time for my uncle's return home drew near, his cat listened and mewed. Then, the view from the lower windows being obstructed by a wall, 'Cribbs' would often run to the top of the house and post himself at a window commanding the London depths below. Here he would wait until he distinguished his friend coming, and then rush down and tell my aunt. My uncle had rarely need for his latch-key. His wife and cat were nearly always there to greet him before he reached the door."

WE have decided to publish "Cat Gossip" pedigree forms, as most of the forms obtainable are really intended for dogs, and give space for particulars which do not apply to cats. Ours allow for a four-generation pedigree, and, as they are specially designed for cats, we think that they will meet the needs of breeders. They cost 1s. a dozen, post free from this office, and a sample copy will be sent for 1½d.

COMPETITION.

WE offer a tin of Radio-Malt (Veterinary), to a litter of kittens born on June 21st, and advertised in our "Births" column. In case no kittens are born on that day, the prize will be given to the litter whose birthday is nearest. If two litters tie for the prize, it will be sent to the owner whose entry was received first.

BIRTHS.

June 13th.—Miss Wakeford's **Natalia of Cleave**, one very fine son by **Prince Igor of Cleave**.



CONTINENTAL CATDOM.

Brussels Show, last Sunday, brought together about 200 exhibits. M. Steens' team of L.H. blues were N.F.C. Siamese were very good, Mrs. Bassnett's old Shee-Lah shown hors concours, being in good form despite her age. Mlle. Tzaut exhibited two "Parkside" cats, and did well with her Ch. Downend, a Milord o' Mendip son.

"Unsere Katze" this month contains but little for the "Fancier" pure and simple, but is full of interest for the genuine cat lover; alas, the two do not always coincide, thanks undoubtedly to the horrid spirit of commercialism nowadays so prevalent in the Cat Fancy, and which we note Mr. House censures in our contemporary. We have ere now deplored this dreadful spirit, and been so attacked for doing so, that it comes as a consolation to us to find that one who is so eminently qualified to judge and form an opinion on such a matter as is Mr. House, thinks, as we do, that there is to-day a great lack of true Fancier spirit as compared with the old days. We have stated it as our opinion, and still hold, that with very many nowadays it is mainly a question of "make," and that real Fancy "n'y est pour rien"; and, further, we believe the undue popularity of certain breeds is in no wise due to their inherent excellence, but almost entirely due to the fact that they **pay best**, owing to a sheepish public having been educated to regard them alone as being "worth while." Mr. House will now probably have some of the abuse unloaded on his head which we underwent—but we believe he can bear it!

Our Berlin contemporary tells us that at the Congress of Animals' Protection Societies, at Vienna, far more stress than usual was laid on the necessity of help for the Cat, the worst-treated of all domestic animals. Amongst the speakers was the Duchess of Hamilton.

"The dog is the eternal 'Yesman' to the human; the cat can also say 'No.' The dog makes his desires subordinate to the human; the cat desires what **she** desires. The dog is always at command, the cat has her hours for consultation." (From Herr Zimmermann's speech.)

Features of the Vienna Cat Show were a Wild Cat and a Serval. Alas, vexatious legislation has prevented interesting exotic exhibits from being seen here—for who would put a cat through six months quarantine? What possible danger could be imported by wild felines always kept caged? But British Bumbledom and grandmotherly interference take no notice of such details.

Two cat film stars of the "Ufa" are now exciting much interest in Germany.

Vienna and the surrounding district is now suffering from a virulent form of feline distemper, which usually ends in death.

Our compliments to the Executive of the Bonn Show, which welcomes all breeds, in contradistinc-

tion to the short-sighted policy of some German Shows catering only for what they call "noble breeds," excluding all European shorthairs, except Manx. The ever-increasing army of cat lovers in Germany, which is working hard to alleviate the hard lot of the Common Cat, should, as far as they can, combat this short-sighted policy on the part of some shows. The more valuable an animal may be, the higher place will it take in public opinion. If the public see that an ordinary Short-haired Cat may do well at shows, it will think more of these cats, and gradually they will assume a better position in the public mind. If it sees them neglected by cat-lovers' organisations, the public will despise them; thus we affirm, without fear of contradiction, that those German Shows which ignore the ordinary "Hauskatze" are really but poor friends to the Cat! H. C. B.

OBITUARY.

THE PASSING OF MR. FRANK WOOFF, M.R.C.V.S., Lond.

The Croydon Cat Club has sustained a sad and irreparable loss by the death, on June 5th, of its Hon. Veterinary Surgeon, Mr. Frank Wooff. For the past eight years Mr. Wooff worked with enthusiasm for the good of the Club, and its interests and welfare were very near his heart.

Very few of those present at the last Croydon Cat Club Show were aware that on the previous day Mr. Wooff had undergone the first of several painful operations which his illness necessitated. In spite of weakness and suffering he was at his post the same evening passing in the exhibits which had already arrived, and when I reached the hall at 7.15 the morning of the Show I found him, still suffering, but full of courage, ready for his arduous task, nor did he fail to carry on all through that long day.

As Hon. Secretary to the C.C.C. I cannot pay too high a tribute to the kindness and consideration which I have received from Mr. Wooff during the years we have worked together. For twenty-three years he has attended our own pets, and I have had many opportunities of observing the skill and tenderness of his treatment. He really **loved** all animals, and they repaid him with their implicit trust and affection. I could give many interesting and touching illustrations if space permitted.

He was brother of the late T. J. Wooff, of Greenwich, who used to vet. the Bulldog Show Mr. H. C. Brooke ran at the Westminster Aquarium and Crystal Palace in the nineties.

As I stood by Mr. Wooff's graveside yesterday I thought of the countless numbers of dumb creatures whose lives had been saved or prolonged, and whose sufferings were relieved by his skill and care, and I felt they, too, like us, had lost a true friend.

HELEN HILL-SHAW, Hon. Sec. C.C.C.
June 11th, 1929.

CAT CALLS.

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

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Madam,—There seem to be still a few misapprehensions regarding certain details of the Bill for the Taxation and Protection of Cats, which give rise to fears and objections voiced by some of my correspondents. These you will, perhaps, allow me to meet once for all.

It is urged, apparently with seriousness, that, to avoid a tax, people will keep nothing in the way of felinity but kittens under four months! Most people, however much they may delight in the gambols of extreme youth, are not insensible of relief when the kitten is no longer "always under one's skirts"—or, as we should say now, in the absence of skirts, "under one's feet." A continuous succession of two months' old kittens would certainly constitute an excellent training in the art of keeping one's temper! Also, where are the kittens coming from? Owners will not pay even a small stud fee with the altruistic design of supplying their neighbours with two months' old kittens free. So, if the kittens have to be paid for, why not pay in tax once a year rather than buy a kitten every two months? Moreover, we have that prospective kitten-hunter on the hip in another way. No one will be allowed to purchase, or otherwise acquire, a kitten or cat unless he possesses a licence. So, when he haunts your doors in eager search of a two months' infant, see that he shows his licence before you hand over the kitten.

Some appear to forget that, under the Bill, there will be no mating of females except by design. There will be no unwanted kittens. Female babies will be in demand, and preferred by many to males. I believe, too, that it is the constant indication of the tom cat's presence that brings females into season too often. With the complete removal of this incitement it should not be necessary to mate a female more than twice a year. For two months she awaits her motherhood, for two—or, better, three—months she trains her children; and then for a month or two she will rest on her laurels. Experience assures me that I am not wrong in ascribing too frequent "seasons" to the propinquity of the male, in the great majority of cases. The difficulty of searching the slums has been swept away by General Higgins' promise of the whole-hearted help of his Salvation Army—a magnificent asset, for which we are profoundly grateful.

Often are we reminded that many dogs are discarded as licence-time approaches. I repeat that these dogs are chiefly mongrels, due to chance mating. Even then, the number of "stray," or unwanted, dogs is a drop in the ocean compared with the ever-racing torrent of hapless cats. What would be the result of removing the tax on dogs? It has just been announced that during the last four years the number of stray dogs received at the Battersea Home has diminished by 4,000. How strange it is that so much pity is expended on a relatively few dogs, while these fender-hearted souls view with absolute composure the continuance of a yearly sacrifice of appalling multitudes of cats!

At the base of all objections to the Bill that I have heard lies a great lump of selfishness and meanness. The objectors do not wish to pay—that is the crude fact. Rather than spend a few shillings on their own cats, they will ignore the fate of those who have no home, no responsible owner—the hundreds of thousands who in England alone are every year the victims of their incredible indifference. For words that are not translated into actions are no better than the good intentions that pave the paths of hell. "O you of little faith!" cried the Bearer of glad tidings. O you of little love! "Some-time, some-how"—that is your complaisant refrain as the living sacrifice is offered up before your eyes. Yet it may be that *some-time, some-how*, those lives will be required of you.

F. M. BALLINGALL.

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Dear Madam,—I fail to follow Mrs. Jarvis' contention that her critics—for although she only cites Mr. Brooke I assume she is speaking collectively—have taken "a wrong impression" of her recent letter. Speaking as one of her three critics—and I believe the other two would share my sentiments—her letter bore one simple interpretation, viz., that she had been "led up the garden"—otherwise "bluffed." The dangerous effect of the narcotic administered by Mrs. Jarvis' medical authority confidant was painfully apparent in her sentences, and we felt bound to protest first at her own gullibility, and, secondly, at the prospective mischief in disseminating such dope, even through the medium of a publication read by ostensible animal champions (let alone the ordinary Press). What the public want is not a soothing lullaby, but a rousing bugle call to awaken them to the menace in their midst of the paid prowler for the physiologists. I confess that to hear any vivisection protagonist describe him or herself—or being so described by others—as "an animal-lover" always piles on the last breaking straw to my patience.

I submit that it is sheer inevitable humbug to attempt to play the double role of lover and exploiter. Granted merely for sake of argument—that good to humans has emerged from the racks of torture troughs, what does, e.g., Mark Twain, say on this moot point? Unerringly he lays his pen on the moral plague spot of human craven cowardice in these words: "Even if I were convinced of the efficacy of vivisection, that would not remove my hostility to it. The suffering inflicted upon non-consenting animals constitutes the basis of my enmity to it, and that to me is all-sufficient justification of the enmity without looking further."

Mrs. Jarvis declares she herself would refuse to have even one cat tortured to save her from death, but can she "answer for all to be thus willing to sacrifice themselves?" The obvious retort is that one cannot blunt and shunt one's own sense of individual responsibility

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because others may default. One is not expected to guarantee the communal consciousness, nor is there any merit in sitting on a fence till the truth, as one sees it becomes popular. Moreover, the desperate alternative of choice between one's own threatened death or its avoidance by consenting to hand over some animal to the tormentors, is a contingency so remote as to be mythical. It is all vivisectional sabre-rattling, and is rapidly ceasing to intimidate the enlightened public. These dramatic crises simply do not arise—so why worry?

We friends of animals—and God knows they have not too many—must decline to discuss dispassionately the justifiably of performing "partial nephrectomy" or cutting a celluloid window in the side of a crucified cat. We must be "intolerant," and say that it is damnable; and—emulating Twain's splendid stubbornness—that we refused to "look further."

Yours faithfully,

M. DUDLEY WARD.

15, Upper Westbourne Terrace, W. 2, June 7th, 1929.

[This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.]

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URGENT.—Lady is very much distressed, being compelled to part with her two treasured Pets, Dark Persian and Grey Tabby Persian, females; most affectionate; been greatly petted. Would some kind reader give Temporary or Permanent Good Home to One or Both, to save lives? References.—MISS SPENCER, Training College, Truro.

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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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