

CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 4

First Edited by H. C. BROOKE

Edited by E. K. WAKEFORD

No. 132

JUNE 26th, 1929

Price 3s. 6d. quarterly, post free

LONG-HAIR LORE.

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

“Oh, vale and lake! within yon mountain urn,
Smiling so tranquilly and yet so deep,
Oft doth your dreamy loveliness return
Colouring the tender shadows of my sleep
With light Elysian.”

Hemans.

Coniston is still one of the unspoilt corners of Lakeland, a little old-world village nestling at the foot of the Old Man. Cradled in the arms of green hills and heather heights lies Coniston Water, that most lovely of English Lakes, where verdant pastures and sunny slopes reach down to the water's edge. At Tilberthwaite Phyll, only a short walk from the village is to be found a true lakeland farm, where the whirr of the spinning wheel may still be heard, and where the longevity of the inhabitants is wonderful, even for these parts. In one of the cottages close to Tilberthwaite it is not so very long ago that there was to be found an old dame who was nursing her grandson's grandson! Of her might the famous lines have been written, “Arise, daughter, and go to thy daughter, for thy daughter's daughter hath got a daughter.”

When visiting this part of the world last year I noticed a race of short-haired blue cats, in which I was most interested. Unlike the Persians, their bodies are long and svelte with close short fur, pointed faces and large ears, and they have green eyes. This year I hunted them to their lair, and found a little female, barely two months old, which I am bringing home with me. She is a dear little thing, and not unwilling to come I think. I may not keep her for myself, but it seemed a pity that those elusive green eyes should be wasted on the desert air, or, perchance, become the fodder of some farmer's gun, as so often happens in this part of the country. I don't think it is generally known what an important part cats play in our cold storage warehouses. The temperature of these is so low (6 degrees above zero) that it was hoped that it would keep away rats. Instead of this, however, they quickly became accustomed to the icy temperature, and flourished exceedingly, rearing huge families whilst feasting on the fat of the land. It was then thought that cats might be introduced with advantage, and a few hardy pioneers were established. Four out of five perished, but the great law of the

survival of the fittest triumphed, and kittens born into this icy temperature began to look like little Polar Bears, their fur was so thick and warm! By degrees their ears disappeared, their tails became shorter and shorter, whilst their health improved by leaps and bounds, and they became imbued with a fierce activity, and are now amongst the hardest of the species.

The little cream kitten bought by Mrs. Campbell-Fraser from the Pineland Cattery is called Mavis of Pineland, and is bred from Bubbles of Hanley and Marigold of Pineland.

At the Blue Persian Society's Meeting Miss Fisher told me that she had three splendid grandsons of the famous Ch. Azure of Hadley, their sire being Idol of Hadley.

Eve of Pensford, owned by Miss Galletley, has presented her owner with three kittens by Ch. Dion of Allington, whilst Juno of Pensford has also visited the same stud. Jasmine of Farnborough had rather a bad time, and though she produced five kittens, three died at birth, but I am told on excellent authority that the two survivors, a male and female, are the two most lovely kittens that have ever been seen!

My precious little Dainty Ladye has also not been very successful, for the first time in her career, and out of five lovely babies, by Son o' Flick, only one remains, a fine little male.

In a day or two we shall be home once more, and once again I shall be with my pets. I have several times telephoned through to Berkeley Place from here, and have heard all there is to tell; they are in splendid hands, and all goes well. It has been a wonderful holiday. We have visited many places amongst perfect scenery, and enjoyed each moment as it came. Yesterday, whilst walking through an unploughed field we disturbed a plovers' nest, and it was quaint to see how the parent birds did everything in their power to lead us away from their young. We then visited a famous old farm, dating back to the fourteenth century, and later found ourselves sitting quietly by Windermere Lake watching two swans swimming proudly before us with the tiniest of baby cygnets between them, whilst seagulls darted hither and thither above our heads, uttering their shrill cries to attract our attention. At the farm attached to the hotel is a baby calf, but a fortnight old, which drinks three quarts of milk

twice a day out of a bucket! And there are dozens of baby chickens, and a very shy cat, which disappears into the pigsty when we approach her!

SUMMER EVENING.

"The sandy cat, by the farmer's chair,
Mews at his knee for dainty fare;
Old Rover, in his moss-greened house,
Mumbles a bone, and barks at a mouse;
In the dewy fields the cattle lie,
Chewing the cud 'neath a fading sky;
Dobbin at manger pulls his hay;
Gone is another summer's day."

Walter de la Mare.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

WE have received a notice of the Siamese Cat Club Show, which is to be held at the Philbeach Hall, Earl's Court, on Wednesday, September 25th. Those of our readers who do not happen to be members of the Club, and who are thinking of showing their cats or kits, should send their names to Miss K. Wilson (Show Manager), "Chalkpits," Springwell, Rickmansworth, so that a schedule may be sent to them in due course.

Mrs. Bazeley has just welcomed the first litter of the year in her cattery—Colneside Camelia's four beautiful kittens by Colneside Christopher. Since she started breeding, many years ago, she has never been without Spring kittens, but it must be some consolation to know that innumerable other catteries have also been kittenless. We wish the very best of luck to these latest additions to the famous Colneside cats, and hope that they will prove worthy of their ancestors.

WE have had some most charming cat portraits sent to us from the Empire Cattery, with which to decorate our office walls. They include two delightful snaps of Empire Ladye, mothering a litter—or should it be a clutch?—of chickens. This little cat came to a very tragic end, for she died from the effects of a stoat bite received while she was minding her chicks, at the ripe age of 16 years. Her portrait is certainly worthy of a place of honour.

Miss Dixon has not very much news of her cats, for though Ch. Simzette has a family, now two months old, the other queen, Aouda, seems to have no wish for a family of her own. Before the arrival of her mother's kittens she was seldom quiet, but she has helped to bring them up, and has evidently decided in her own mind that motherhood is too much of a tie! Aouda must be the Modern Girl of whom we read at such length in the daily papers.

Miss Oldfield Howey has very kindly written to tell us that she had a number of replies when she advertised her little bungalow in "Cat Gossip," and that she intends to use our advertisement columns again. Many people never think of advertising in a paper devoted to cats unless they actually have cats or kittens for sale, forgetting that cat fanciers have other interests, and that advertisements on all sorts of subjects are quite likely to bring replies.

WE have come to the conclusion that Russian Blues do not possess that deep affection for places which is supposed to be characteristic of cats, but can be perfectly happy anywhere if they are with the people whom they love. The little lady who is in charge of the "Cat Gossip" Office, and who went to our cattery in the country when we moved, came back to us this week, and after a very brief inspection of her new quarters, settled down in absolute contentment. She certainly shows no desire to escape and go back to the house in which she has spent the greater part of her short life. We have never known a Russian Blue to be in the least perturbed by strange surroundings, except in the absence of a beloved owner. Our Russians even take the very abnormal conditions which meet them at shows with the most admirable placidity, and eat and sleep there just as well as they do at home.

Mr. H. C. Brooke, who has not yet recovered from his illuesses of the winter, leaves for the Continent this week, intending, amongst other places visited, to spend a couple of weeks in his beloved Vienna, the "City of Enticement," as it was so aptly styled by an English novelist, whose fascinating novel, dealing with life in the city on the Blue Danube, bore this title.

CAT CALLS.

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

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Dear Madam.—I fear the phrase I used re the advisability of destroying all kittens as they emerge from the mother has been regrettably misleading. I should certainly allow the whole litter to "emerge," and also leave one or even two before lethallying the remainder. Much better to "waft on" the tinies instantly before they have begun to grip life, which said "grip" commences almost immediately. I agree that it is advisable always to leave one baby, but if all have to "go"—and sometimes it is imperative—they should go before any milk is drawn from the mother. Some people advise the first milk being drawn off, but this is wrong. Subsequent treatment of the mother is necessary, but I need not go into that here and now.

M. DUDLEY WARD.

15, Upper Westbourne Terrace, W. 2, June 5th, 1929.

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Madam.—Will you allow me, through your columns, to beg members of the Fancy not to allow themselves to be led into the bad habit of using such bastard words as "deströyäl," as applied to unwanted kittens. It is distressing enough when our beautiful language is corrupted and rendered ludicrous by persons who derive all their education from "the Talkies" and from semi-illiterate film producers. The mad influx of American jargon threatens to make Shakespeare's language almost unintelligible to the rising generation. The B.B.C. is doing splendid work in trying to preserve some semblance of decent speech and the "King's English."

There is no such word as "deströyäl" in our language. "Destruction" is what your correspondent really meant. I hope you will courageously put your editorial blue pencil through all such errors in future.

I am, Madam, yours faithfully,

A LOVER OF ENGLISH.

Carshalton, June 12th, 1929.



BOOK REVIEW.

"Nos Chats—Onze Katten" is the very latest addition to our "catty" library shelf. Dr. George Hasse's profusely illustrated book of 78 pages is written in the French and Flemish languages. It commences with full details of the Belgian Cat Clubs: then gives a form of complaint to the Public Prosecutor suitable for use by any person having seen a case of cruelty to a cat. Then follows the list of breeds. In S.H. the blues are divided into American Blues and Persian Blues. Why is there so much diversity in the nomenclature of S.H. Blues, which the Americans usually call Maltese? In some parts of Europe they are called Carthusian and Cyprus cats. Smoke S.H. are also included in the list; the portrait given looks like a red tabby. Abyssinians are listed, but no description given; two lines are deemed sufficient for Manx (Mr. Ward's Silverwing, the lovely Spotted Silver of 30 years or more ago is portrayed). The length of hind leg and typical shape is not even mentioned! In longhair we again meet with the really absurd custom of dividing the blacks and the whites into Persians and Angoras, which must lead to a given litter comprising both Persians and Angoras! Patched, bicolour, and tricolour L.H. are also classified. No separate reference is made to Red or Silver Tabbies, in fact L.H. Tabbies altogether are dismissed with three lines! Dr. Hasse evidently shares our preference for S.H., but considers there is an English and a European type! The "tigrés" illustrated are almost all "tiger-striped" or "mackerel." We have suggested to Continental catty leaders that it is high time they made proper definitions between the longitudinal striping or normal tabby markings and the transverse striping, or tiger-marking; at present all stripy cats are usually called "tigré," which is absurd, for who ever saw a longitudinally striped tiger. It is, in fact, really absurd how the description "tiger," which should be clear and definite enough, is played the fool with, when we consider that **spotted** wild cats are called tiger cats, and the patched or Harlequin Great Dane a "Tiger" Dogge!

The S.H. blue "American" evidently answers in type to our Blue Russian, according to Dr. Hasse, who considers that in Siamese "the stumpy or twisted tail is always a sign of too close consanguinity or of deterioration in the strain."

Tortoiseshells, L.H. and S.H., are listed, but, as in the case of Abyssinians, no attempt is made to describe them: surely a serious omission! The S.H. Blue Persian, whatever that may be?—we assume corresponding to our British Blue type—is also left to our imagination. A couple of pages on feeding and general treatment brings the book to an end.

We understand that Dr. Jumaud, the French enthusiast, is now putting the finishing touches to his new book soon to be published, which we believe will be the most comprehensive and up-to-date Continental Cat book.

H. C. B.

THE "COLWAYS" AFFAIR.

BY W. A. REYNOLDS.

Dr. Erik Thallsen leant forward and tapped the Banker on the shoulder.

"You must be perfectly frank," he said gravely. "Unless you tell me everything, I cannot be in a position to help you. Now, tell me: Is there anybody whom you have wronged—anyone who—dead or alive—might wish to harm you?"

The Banker passed his hand across his perspiring brow.

"Those who lead lives such as mine, doctor," he said, "make many enemies. But. . . ." He braced himself with an obvious effort. "There was a clerk once—a man named Somers. He was with me for many years, and served me well. All at once, he started to get lax in his duties; I dismissed him—though I learnt afterwards that he had been returning after his day's work to nurse a wife who had been injured badly in an accident. He never got another post. His wife died of starvation, and he, poor devil, died later in the workhouse—cursing, so they say, me and mine with his last breath."

He paused, again passing his hand across his flaccid face. Thallsen put in a rapid question:

"Did he ever apply to you for aid?"

"He did; and I refused. On principle," he added weakly.

There was silence for a moment, then Thallsen asked:

"And these manifestations you have seen? Have they taken any definite shape—or have they merely been suggestive? This house, 'Colways,' is not very cheerfully placed, and I want to be sure that these happenings are not mere subjective illusions."

The Banker looked up. He hesitated a little, and when he spoke, he did so in the slow, halting tones of one who scarcely believes his story himself, and does not ask others to believe it.

"When I first came here," he said, "I and my man merely felt a sort of oppressive atmosphere, and

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little things, little ornaments and cups, have been disappearing. But this very morning, something very very strange happened. As I was dressing, the door was pushed open—I am certain it was **pushed**—and I distinctly heard something pass across the floor and leap out of the window. I saw nothing—nothing,” he repeated, pausing. “. . . except that when I looked out of the window, I thought I saw a shadow underneath the pines . . . the shadow of an enormous cat.”

Again the hand was passed across the face, which was now moist with a cold sweat of terror. Thallsen nodded, as if what he had just been told was in accordance with his expectations. He smiled reassuringly at the Banker.

“Any other manifestations?” he asked softly.

The Banker shook his head, and Thallsen commenced to speak in that quiet, cold tone which at once thrilled and awed his listeners.

“Whatever happens to-night,” he said gravely, “you must remain calm. Neither move nor speak unless I tell you to.” He turned to me, and lowered his voice to a whisper. “Hold him if he gets wild,” he said. “It may happen any time now.”

“What—?” I queried, though I had some vague idea of Thallsen’s thoughts. But he checked me with a gesture; he came rigidly to attention, listening intently.

From down the passage came a faint scuffling sound, such as a cat makes when he is walking none too warily. The sound came closer, and the Banker’s face muscles began to twitch nervously. His hand ceased to stroke his face: it dropped listlessly to his side. Thallsen remained in an attitude of listening, but I had little time to watch him. I had the Banker to watch . . . and his nerves were evidently getting frayed and torn.

Closer and closer came the sound. In that tense silence, it seemed as though I could hear light breathing. . . . Then, gradually, slowly, menacingly, the door began to swing on its hinges. The Banker made a convulsive effort to jump to his feet, but, though I myself was half terror-stricken, I managed to force him back into his chair.

The door swung wider, and round the edge came the head of a gigantic cat. Thallsen looked at it intently . . . spoke sharply . . . and the great muzzle dropped downwards. It stood, a grey shadow against the wall . . . a shadow through which one could see dimly the shape of objects which lay behind it.

Thallsen advanced towards the beast, which shrunk down as he approached. Then, without warning, came a piercing yell from the Banker. The Beast threw back his head, glaring malevolently at the huddled, frightened figure in the chair. As it gazed in my direction, I saw with horror that there was something recognisably human about its features: something which told of intense suffering, of hatred, vengeance. . . .

The Banker saw it too, for he uttered a cry of frenzied terror. “It’s Somers,” he cried. “Somers. . . .” Thallsen made to stifle him, and the Banker’s hand dropped into his pocket, drawing from it an automatic pistol. With a fierce motion, Thallsen tried to grasp the weapon, but he was too late. There came a flash . . . a report . . . and the bullet went right **through** the cat.

Then followed something which filled me with dread, for the bullet, passing through the attenuous body, ricocheted from the wall behind, and, boomerang like, struck the Banker full between the eyes.

And, as he fell into a distorted heap, the eyes of the cat looked on, joyously . . . triumphantly . . . then faded into the gloom with which they had been surrounded.

“As a matter of fact,” said Thallsen, as he rose from examining the body, “he was killed before the bullet hit him, by the thought emanations of the spirit self of the clerk he had wronged. That man died with his whole thought energies concentrated on vengeance, and, of course, instead of being sublimated, his double became earth-bound, in the form of cat—the symbol of swift, cruel death. You can see, if you look at the place where the bullet entered, that there are faint marks like scratches.”

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Croydon, June, 1929.

BIRTHS.

June 10th.—Mrs. Wade's **Juliette**, 7 fine kittens by Mrs. Kidd's **John of Downside**.

June 15th.—Miss Wakeford's **Sandra of Cleave**, 4 kittens (2 males and 2 females), by Owner's **Prince Igor of Cleave**. Russian Blues.

June 19th.—Mrs. Bazeley's **Colneside Camelia**, 4 fine kittens by **Colneside Christopher**.

June 20th.—Miss Wakeford's **Daffodil of Cleave**, 4 cream kittens by Owner's **Peregrine Pickle**.

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

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