

# 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).

"Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is."

Tennyson.

The welcome rain has transformed the garden from a parched sunburned waste to a smiling oasis where we can once more look for and enjoy the blossoms that had almost perished of thirst. In the country the cornfields are taking on a warm tint, but not so warm as where a blaze of poppies, like a scarlet cloak thrown aside by some rustic beauty lies outspread amidst the ripening grain. The hedgerows are full of blossom, and yield their secrets to all who care to search for them, whilst in the orchards a rosy cloud peeps through the mist of green where the fruit is ripening in the warm sunshine.

Lady Eardley Wilmot, whose lovely garden at Henley-on-Thames reaches down to the river's edge, sends the following news of her pets, and I give it all in her own words: "You asked me some time ago for any news I had of my cattery. I have still very little, as my numbers are so reduced. To begin with Tiddles. She first of all went to Ch. Dion, but as the visit was not successful I mated her to Ch. Gentleman. As she does not get on with her daughter, Karin, I let her go on a visit to a fancier at Richmond, and the result was a fine litter of four—two males and two females. The litter has been entered for Kensington Show, where I hope to see them for the first time. Tiddles has just come back home as youthful as ever, though she is now getting on in years. As soon as she is ready I hope to send her to Ch. Dion again. Darling provided us with a great scare. She was also mated to Gentleman, and looked very promising. She is the gentlest cat alive, and the sweetest natured, never puts out her claws, and never whines or makes a sound. Indeed, I feared for quite a long time that she had no voice! After she had carried some six weeks she came one evening tearing along the lawn looking like a drowned rat! I handed her over to my maid, and traced her back by the wet trail, right away to a corner of the landing-stage, where I found quite a pool of water. Our next-door neighbour had allowed

his punt to drift within a yard of our landing-stage. Darling, being curious, had jumped from our stage on to the punt—for I could see her footprints on the fresh varnish. Something must have scared her, or she must have slipped up—and fallen short! The river was some ten inches or so below the landing-stage, so she must have had difficulty in climbing up again! We dried her well, and gave her hot milk and brandy, and feared the worst. However, ten days ago a beautiful litter of four broad-headed snub-nosed kittens appeared—two males and two females. I was greatly relieved. Some years previously we had to bathe an expectant mother, after she was four or five weeks in kitten, and the result was disastrous! All the kittens were crippled or open-eyed! So having had this experience I knew what I might expect, and my joy was all the greater. Dinah has been to Ch. Dion, but so far she is not expecting, but I still have hopes of her being mated to him before the season is out. Having bred Ch. Dion I feel sad that so far I haven't a single offspring of his excepting Dinah. Last year I tried hard, and again this year. So far Karin is the only one to oblige, and she is so slim she looks like having a small family. So I am all the more anxious to have Dinah and Tiddles mated before it is too late this season. Ch. Gentleman and Dazzler have been very good and very sure, and I have had none of the difficulties early in the season other breeders complained of, except with queens who came too late and were practically out of season, and in one case with a very cross lady. Her first visit to me was unsuccessful because she was so furious, she would not let anyone handle her, not even her owners! On her second visit I sat with her for ever so long, and gradually got her round to letting me stroke her—and after a lot of coaxing she permitted Dazzler to enter and to marry her. Dear Dazzler is always ready, but so is Gentleman, and both have mated queens this year that their owners have not been successful in getting mated elsewhere."

Prince Karl August of Thurn and Taxis has sent me a picture of Schloss Hofling, the lovely home where Una's Fairy is to dwell, and where I trust she will be a very happy and a very good little maiden. Having kept her for so long it makes it all the harder to part with her, she is such an adorable kitten, and she has such endearing ways. But that is life.

The Kensington Kitten Show is now a thing of the past, and it was a very proud little family I brought home with me with 22 prizes in all.

In my notes last week, when writing about Mrs. Gilbert's kittens, by a slip of the pen I put at eight days they weighed so-and-so, whereas it should have been eighteen.

Mr. and Mrs. Yeates are now spending a well-earned holiday at Lacquree, France, and will, I trust, enjoy every moment of the time.

A most interesting letter comes from Mrs. Joan Thompson, which I intended to include in my notes this week, but which I now find I should have to divide, and give part next week. I think this would be a great pity, and, therefore, am holding them over until they can take their proper place.

Mrs. Lerway-Elliot, who is the breeder of Son o' Flick, and with whom he is spending his holiday, writes to say that she has a litter of very pale blue kittens, just six weeks old, with very sweet faces. One is very like his half-brother, Flick-a-Maroo, and his grand-dam, Maroo, and Mrs. Elliot hopes to keep him to show this year, or that someone will buy him and show him.

### GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

WE have had very little news from fanciers this week, but we hardly expected any. Many people have already gone away for their holidays, and many others are going this week, and are too busy packing to think about anything else. Some of the catteries are empty, and others are full to overflowing, for quite a number of our readers take in boarders during the holiday season, and this year many of the boarders will be accompanied by families of young kittens.

A few years ago it was comparatively difficult to find a temporary home for a cat, but now that country and suburban breeders have realised that the holidays give them an opportunity to make a little extra money, it is easy enough to choose a cattery where the family pets will be looked after as carefully as they are at home. Some London cats thoroughly enjoy a few weeks in the country every summer, and come back feeling as fit as fiddles, and ready to face the strain of the show season.

THE sadder aspect of the same question is emphasised by the appeals which appear in all the papers at this time of year, asking people to provide for their animals whilst they are on holiday. Innumerable cats are houseless and homeless for a fortnight or more, picking up a living as best they can, and lucky if they find someone who will take them in out of charity. The ginger cat who lives at the cats' meat shop round the corner will probably have an increased number of pensioners now. He is allowed to sit on the counter, beside the pile of sliced meat, and when his owners are not looking he pushes slices of meat off the edge of the counter to his friends

who wait expectantly below, sitting on their haunches as close as they can to the wall, so that they are invisible to the proprietors of the shop. The ginger cat himself never eats in public, having presumably gorged himself for the day when the supplies of meat first come in in the morning.

WE used to wonder why it was possible for two dealers in cats' meat to do a really flourishing trade within a hundred yards of one another, but we have now realised that most of the cats in the offices and warehouses in the City have their regular daily rations. Small office boys wait in queues every morning when the shops first open, and office cleaners come round in the evening to call for the cats' allowance on their way to work.

MANX fanciers, of course, do not give their cats horse-flesh, but we find that our two are doing very well on it. It is perfectly fresh, and the shop is as clean as any ordinary butcher's shop, so that there is little risk of contamination. Our cats have other things as well, but horse-flesh is their staple diet, and they prefer it to everything else, even to fish. We took Sally round to fetch her own meat one fine day this week, but she behaved in such a vulgar way, screaming with greed when she saw such a lot of meat all at once, that she must have given people the impression that she hadn't been fed for days. She is usually very calm and dignified when she is out, watching the people and the traffic with wide open eyes, and bowing politely when she hears anyone say, "Why, there's a Siamese cat!" She is flattered, of course, because she will not really be a Siamese cat for five months yet.

Miss Hill-Shaw tells us that her black Manx, Blackberry, has one very lovely dark tabby baby by her new red tabby stud, Josephus. We sincerely hope that this young lady will flourish exceedingly, and grow up into another "of Cademuir" Champion.

### MRS. BUFFARD'S CATTERIES AT CROYDON.

On Sunday last, at the invitation of Miss Hill-Shaw, a small party of us paid a visit to some new catteries kept by Mrs. Buffard at Croydon.

We went primarily to see Chanti, the Siamese cat, who is rearing successfully four Pekinese puppies.

First of all we were shown a large cat-house with covered-in apartments and a very roomy open-air run looking on to a charming garden, and supplied with an almost real tree. An ideal holiday home for one's pets.

In "The Bungalow" adjoining—a long low building with an almost entire glass front—were several "boarders" in roomy pens, scrupulously clean, with a pleasant outlook. All were happy and in good condition.

Strolling about the grounds was the famous Bonzo, eight times champion and sire of champions, at present making his home here. He is the property of Mr. Lloyd Lewis.

We were next introduced to Chanti, housed comfortably in a spacious room all to herself. At the moment she was taking exercise, but allowed us to look at her four foster-children, the tiny puppies whose young mother died in giving them birth.

They were in perfect condition—plump, firm, and contented, with sleepy blue eyes just beginning to inquire into things. Chanti bore an air of supreme indifference, which all our exclamations of admiration and surprise failed to disturb.

"Why this fuss?" she plainly said. "I'm only doing my own special job properly." (Mrs. Wade had said she was a perfect mother.) "What matters it to me of what species or class, nationality or colour the necessitous ones belong."

We left the wonderful little creature reluctantly, and Mrs. Buffard showed us other portions of her catteries. Some of the pens were fitted with sliding partitions to allow of double space if required, though without this device space was ample, and fresh air flooding everywhere.

Accompanying us, and inspecting each of us in turn, was Non Puying, another beautiful Siamese cat. She has a thrilling history. Play-acting is her speciality, she having been one of the "stars" in "A Chinese Bungalow." She is resting at present. We came away feeling that the cats were indeed lucky that found either a temporary or permanent home in this establishment.

R. E. A.

## THE UNSEEN GUEST.

BY W. A. REYNOLDS.

Julia Peterson had one of those quiet personalities which always remind me of the faint, sweet odour of the oak linen chest—a subtle mingling of dried lavender, clean sheets, and aged wood. Her little cottage, set high on the Kentish Weald, overhung with sweet-smelling flowers and embraced by a tiny orchard, dispensed the same fragrant perfume of leisureliness and peace.

It was a curious place to find Dr. Erik Thallsen, who had gone there at the request of one of Miss Peterson's friends—a woman who feared, on account of strange happenings, that Julia was losing her reason. Thallsen's quick, questioning glances, his general air of alertness seemed strangely out of place in a cottage which breathed from every brick, repose, almost sleepiness.

Yet to me, who had acquired something of Thallsen's responsiveness to psychic vibrations, there were obviously other influences at work in the cottage, besides the kindly thoughts of its owner. They were to me patently not evil: Thallsen's slight smile of pleasure when I mentioned my impressions to him, confirmed my opinion.

"Keep your eyes open," he said to me, quietly, "and keep alive to the vibrations of the place. I

think this is going to be a pleasureable experience; there is no danger—unless we ourselves create it."

As he finished speaking, Julia Peterson came into the room, checking our attempt to rise with a subdued smile which was the essence of peacefulness.

"Your supper is ready," she said, in a low, musical voice. "I know you will not mind my Unseen Guest." She spoke the last sentence in a perfectly natural manner, adding a little smile which disarmed surprise.

Following her across the narrow passage, we entered the parlour, made doubly attractive by the falling rays of the setting summer sun. A typical country meal lay upon the table—cheese, a well-crusted loaf, ale, junket and cream. Four places had been set—obviously for the three of us and the Unseen Guest; but the fourth place, unlike the others, had no knife or glass. There was simply a saucer filled with new country milk, on which the cream stood thick.

Conversation skirted round the subject uppermost in our minds, dealing only with those commonplaces usual amongst strangers. As we talked, I noticed that Thallsen's eyes were fixed upon the saucer. I, too, cast furtive glances in that direction. To my surprise and horror, the milk was steadily growing less; the surface, hitherto smooth, was rippled just as if a cat were lapping there.

Miss Peterson gave a low, soft chuckle.

"This happens every night," she said. "I do not know who my little guest is, but he comes every evening and shares my supper when I'm alone. He's company—for this is the first time in all my life I've been without a pet. And the way that milk goes is just as if my old chum Ferdinand, who was my cat and my mother's for so many years, were back again." She became wistful, thinking of the old cherished cat who had been her family's friend.

"I first noticed it one evening when I had set out a dish of cream on the table," she continued. "It was lapped up, and, after that, something prompted me to put milk there regularly. I wasn't, and am not now, a bit frightened. And—I shall never have a pet of any kind while this one comes. Even when he doesn't lap the milk, I can feel he's here. I can hear him scuttling along the passage; see that my cotton reels and balls of wool have been played with; and sometimes, when it has been raining, I have seen little pussy footmarks on the clean doorstep—little marks that have vanished soon after."

Thallsen looked at her keenly.

"There has been no suspicion of—evil?" he questioned quietly. "No dark thoughts or suggestions of unclean things?"

Miss Peterson laughed.

"By no means," she replied. "Since my Unseen Guest has come, I have lost all feeling of loneliness. I have been . . . very happy."

\* \* \* \* \*



When Miss Peterson had retired, Thallsen turned to me, a look of puzzlement upon his face.

"It is difficult to know how to act," he said, reflectively. "If I materialise this visitor, I may disperse a kindly influence, leaving the way clear for a bad. On the other hand, if I leave matters alone, anything may happen." He glanced abstractedly out of the window. "To-night would be propitious," he remarked. "Perhaps we had better take the lesser risk."

He went outside, returning in a moment with a saucer of milk which he placed upon the floor. Round this he made the greater arc of a magic circle, leaving an entry clear. Then, putting out the lamp, he sat down to wait.

For about half-an-hour, all was still; then a faint rustling sound disturbed the silence, and the milk in the saucer became ruffled. Quickly, Thallsen closed the magic circle, uttering some old formula handed down throughout the ages. The air round the saucer seemed to grow darker . . . to take shape . . . until the faint outline of a cat was seen. It became more solid, till a magnificent old English tabby looked out at us from two glorious orbs of green—eyes which had in them an expression of ineffable kindness.

It was then that the door quietly opened, and Miss Peterson, clad in a woollen dressing gown, her hair loose down her back, entered with the stiff movement of a sleep-walker. She saw the cat, her face lighting with a supreme pleasure.

"Ferdinand!" she called lovingly, and the cat, purring loudly, tried to jump across the magic circle which held it fast. It looked towards her, those great, luminous eyes filled with a happiness almost human, yet supernatural, eyes which told of love, protection. . . .

Then the shape began to fade, and Thallsen led the still sleeping Miss Peterson to a chair.

"It's quite all right," he said to me softly. "The visitor is good, protective."

The sleeping woman woke with a cry.

"Where—?"

Thallsen quietened her with a gesture.

"You—dreamt?" he asked.

Her eyes filled with happiness.

"I dreamt of Ferdinand—that he was here, protecting me."

Thallsen looked at her, and answered with unwoofed tenderness.

"The love you bore that cat lives on," he almost whispered. "You did not dream; you saw his spirit self. He was here; we saw him too."

"He will stay? You have not sent him away?" Her questions were eager, supplicating.

"He will stay because he and you are good," came the quiet answer. "He will remain to be your protector always."

A shaft of moonlight fell upon the saucer: it was quite empty.

## WITH OUR CATS.

BY F. M. BALLINGALL.

DAVID AND JONATHAN.

(Continued from Page 185.)

Kitty now spent the whole day with us, sharing bed and board. When dusk fell, I took him to the wall, and watched him into his garden. One evening it was quite dark. Seeing the lights in his house, I wondered they did not call him in earlier. Came an evening, not long after, when I took him out, placed him on the wall, and returned to Corry. But, having forgotten something, I went back to the kitchen, and was startled to hear a soft scratching noise on the back door. Unbolting it, I opened the door. On the step was the kitten! He ran in—as if afraid of being shut out. He had not returned before, so far as I knew. I lifted him, and carried him in my arms to the wall, and placed him on it, but he did not jump down. Standing up on something, I managed to get a look at his house. It was in utter darkness!

"They have shut you out, the wretches!" I whispered to him, as I took him close in my arms. "I will never put you out again. You shall stay with us altogether." And he stayed.

Corry's happiness was now complete. I had never been able to have Corry in my bedroom, as I wished, because I always have a light, and he would not settle to sleep, but played and roamed about, getting no proper sleep. So I made a bed for him every night in a basket, which was placed at one end of the Chesterfield in my room. I made a bed for Kitty at the other end. There were folding-doors between the rooms, and sometimes I went in during the night to look at them. Kitty was usually inside the basket, and Corry close to him—outside.

The love of Corry seemed, if possible, to increase as the kitten grew older. He had become so used to answer to "Kitty" that I chose "Pixie" for his name, as the sounds were similar. I learned that

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his people had left their house, which explained the darkness, without taking their kitten. Often I have wondered if he had been shut out any night before I heard him at our door, and have hoped not. He would surely have come down to the bedroom door, which, as he knew, opened on the garden.

(To be continued.)

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## BIRTHS.

July 13.—Mrs. Neville's Margaret of Chyngton, 3 males and 2 females by Mrs. Yeates' Son o' Flick.

July 30.—Miss Wakeford's Sheltie of Drumblair, 4 fine kittens by Owner's Prince Igor of Cleave (Russian Blues).

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