

CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 4

First Edited by H. C. BROOKE

Edited by E. K. WAKEFORD

No. 149

OCT. 23rd, 1929

Price 3s 6d. quarterly, post free

LONG-HAIR LORE.

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

But yesterday she played with childish things,
With toys, and my old boot;
To-day she may be speeding on bright wings;
Beyond the stars! we ask. The stars are mute.

But yesterday her love was all in all;
She purred and was content,
To-day she will not answer if we call;
She dropped no toys to show the road she went.

But yesterday she purred and ranged with art
Her playthings on my bed;
To-day and yesterday are leagues apart!
She will not purr to-day, for she is dead.

Requiem.

Guy St. Barbe (after George Barlow).

Miss Kathleen Yorke has kindly sent me the following notes on the career of dear little Souriya of Culloden:

Descended from Milord o' Mendip and Ch. Marise of Allington, Barbara of Culloden had by Ch. Colneside Billy Bumpet, Thalia of Culloden, who was Son o' Flick's first little mate, and Souriya, born on April 22nd, 1929, was their first daughter to be born. Miss Hydou, who took Thalia and Souriya's sister Charmian to America, begged very hard to be allowed to take Souriya as well. She loved, as did every one else, her delightful little snub nose, which looked as if she were always pressing it against the window pane! Souriya was shown at Sandy, 1928, where she was second in her open class, and at Thame she was first in her open class and best blue kitten. She then went to Reading, and was again first in her open class, which honour she again received at the Crystal Palace. Souriya and Mrs. Yeates' Columbine were the best blue females of last season. I don't think the Culloden Cattery has ever bred or owned a pet that was so much admired. Everywhere we went the question was always 'How is your beautiful Souriya?' She loved her home, and she loved Blessing, but we had planned otherwise for her, and in due time we took her to the mate we had chosen for her. But sweet little Souriya thought differently, and in spite of every persuasion and the greatest patience she absolutely refused to do as we wished, and later she mated with her own love, as she had evidently arranged in her dear little mind to do. The week before she was taken from us she gave us four of the sweetest little Blessings any one could wish for. She loved them, and was so proud to show them

to us. But towards the end she became too ill to tend them, and a dear old tabby we had saved from destruction because she was in kitten is now bringing them up. We hope dear little Souriya's spirit is in them, and that they will give us some of the love their sweet little mother used to lavish on us."

When writing recently of Jasmine of Farnborough I said she won her ninth 1st prize at Thame Agricultural Show. These 1st prizes have, of course, been won as cat and kitten, not only as an adult, otherwise she would be a champion ere this! Jasmine is perfect in every way, save that she does not grow the long flowing coat, so usual in whites, also I think I am right in saying that up to now she has not produced a kitten as lovely as herself, though Echo of the Court tells me that she intends to be just as lovely as her mother one day, and that her kittens are going to be lovelier still!

Good news comes from Mrs. Brunton and her pets, which I give in her own words: "Yes! My small family has increased since you heard of them. Delphinium had five kittens by Puff Ball, and my dear 'old' Bubbles has four beauties by Flick-a-Maroo. Both litters have tiny ears and such round heads, and some are of the palest blue. Meadowsweet is the grandmother of Delphinium and mother of Cornflower (though there doesn't seem more than three years' difference); the latter lady expects her babies in ten days or so by Puff Ball. He has been siring some lovely litters, very pale, with tiny ears and lovely heads. He, Puff Ball, is going to Harrogate Show. There is a show in Edinburgh on Thursday, so I have entered two kittens and Puff Ball. I hope it may yet be possible to have a Newcastle Show. It is always the nicest show of the year, I think, and I am sure a great many people will be very disappointed if it does not take place. I had eleven kittens in the spring, and I have four left which I am going to advertise, and now I have these babies. You know, I think, that Sweet Lavender, Wildflower's daughter, went to America, and also one of Delphinium's kittens, a male."

Echo of the Court is quite ready to go to a new home now, and I have decided to part with her as soon as the right person turns up! She should be very valuable to white breeders, as she is so well bred, and has most lovely eyes—true sapphire in colour, and she is very hardy. I am taking her to Reading, where she will be on view. By Ch. Hercules

of Mayfield, ex Jasmine of Farnborough, she is now three months old, and of an unusually sweet disposition, not at all nervous, and plays about house and garden happily from morning till night, and is no trouble whatsoever. Personally I cannot see any disadvantage in deafness in white cats and kittens, or perhaps I should say that personally I have not found it any disadvantage. My kittens are unusually happy little things, and a journey holds no terrors for them. Also they are not startled by sudden sounds; an aeroplane hovering over the garden does not drive them terror stricken into some corner whence it is difficult to extricate them. Were I sending Echo or Narcissus on a long journey, either by aeroplane or rail or car, I should have no fear for them; whereas a blue kitten or cat suffers desperately at the noise from which there is no escape, and my heart sinks at the thought of what they may suffer mentally before the journey's end. All this, however does not explain why white cats are so difficult at shows. I cannot think it due to deafness, but probably to some inherited instinct of a horror of captivity. White cats, like white polar bears, possess unusual powers of resistance to cold. Perhaps they also possess in the same degree the terror of captivity, and of being confined in small spaces. It is all very difficult to explain.

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

Now that the shows are really beginning in earnest, many breeders are racking their brains for suitable names for their kittens, who have hitherto answered to nicknames unworthy of their high degree. It is more difficult in some ways to name a kitten than it is to name a baby, since there is no rule amongst humans against using the same name over and over again, and most babies are either called after relations or else are given the fashionable name of the moment. Also, few people have to find names for more than one baby at a time, whilst a cat breeder may have half a dozen or more anonymous kittens tumbling about the place. Dr. Aylen's plan is an excellent one. His kittens by Bonzo ex Chara-Mana are all called after their parents, Manzo, Mazo, Bona, Mabo, and Boma; but, of course, there are many names which simply cannot be rearranged in this effective way—imagine trying to combine Son o' Flick and Princess Una of the Court, for instance. Other breeders concentrate on racehorses or characters in books—there are two Trigos and a Lily Christine this year—and still others go in for elaborate misspelling. There was obviously some confusion in the sex of Heshherit, but none at all in that of Maeltomis. It is a good thing, by the way

for people who are apt to make mistakes about the sex of their kittens to choose rather ambiguous names, lest they find themselves landed with a stud cat called Lady Jane, or something equally feminine, for a name may not be changed, even in this emergency. Some prefixes and affixes help to solve the problem, but others limit the range of choice considerably. We discovered this for ourselves when we were choosing our own affix, nearly decided on "of Polesteeples," and found that it sounded quite wrong with nearly all the names we could think of. Some breeders avoid all affixes for this very reason, but we were driven to take one, because we never, by any chance, got the names we wanted, however unusual they were. At the present time we get our kittens' names from the back of the Russian dictionary, but the great disadvantage of this is that they are invariably mispronounced by other people, who have not looked them up in the dictionary. We never know whether to mispronounce them ourselves, out of politeness, or to be pedantically accurate. We have used up most of the Russian names now, and are falling back upon Greek ones, which are not really so suitable, but are much easier to pronounce.

WE have just been reading Lucy Crump's delightful book, **Nursery Life 300 years ago**, which is an account of the childhood of the Dauphin of France, who was afterwards Louis XIII. This little Dauphin has a special claim to kindly remembrance, since it was he who, at three years old, interceded for the lives of the cats who were to be thrown on the bonfire on St. John's Eve, and persuaded the King to issue an edict against this barbarous custom. There is only a very brief record of this incident in the book, which says nothing about the edict, but it led us to turn to **The Fireside Sphinx**, where there is a more detailed description of the mediæval persecution of cats. Although the little Dauphin had quite a number of dogs, there is no mention of any cats at the Palace, but we may surmise that it was some charming favourite kitten who taught her master to think kindly of her race.

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Aug. 22.—William Barnes, assistant janitor of the Welfare building, reported an unusual sight on Wednesday, when he claims he saw a cat meet death due to a spider. According to Barnes the cat was chasing the spider, and finally reached it with a leap and swallowed it hurriedly. Then, he says, the cat's neck began to swell, and after a few minutes it dropped dead. Just as we go to press, we note another curious item in "Dog World" for September, about Roach Bites, in which Sarah Harris, of Chicago, tells of several instances of toy puppies, among them her own Pekingese, being bitten by cockroaches. It is said that first a large swelling appears, then disappears, and the bowel movements turn from watery to black with mucus, and death results.—
t Review."

CAT CALLS.

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

To the Editor of "Cat Gossip."

Dear Editor,—I saw in last week's "Gossip" that one of your correspondents was asking whether you had ever heard of any cats which would eat strawberry jam or cheese. I have never known a cat who didn't like uncooked cheese. One of ours nearly goes mad over it, and will climb up you if he sees that you have a piece of cheese. Martin, a Russian, is just as fond of chocolate, and if there is a box of it anywhere in his reach he is sure to find it. He also seems to wish to keep thin, as he will not eat whipped cream, and will stop eating if we say he is getting fat! David, a tabby, will try to get bits of potato when they are being peeled; he also likes most cooked greens. Among the things that our cats—past and present—would eat are: Tinned pineapple juice, raisins, tomatoes, toffee, raspberry jam, peas (boiled and raw), and boiled mint, without counting pastry, cakes, biscuits, etc.

Yours truly,

(Misses) V. & P. CROSSLAND.

Packway, Windermere, October 9th, 1929.

BLACK SIAMESE AND A TORTOISE TOM.

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

It is really most remarkable that in the course of fifty years or so we have not arrived at the truth as to the "Royalty" or "Holiness" of the Siamese Cat! One would have thought it would long ago have been settled one way or the other. At any rate, these supposed attributes have been denied by personages of very high standing in Siam.

As to the Black Siamese: After all, is there anything wonderful if these do occur? The idea of their turning up just in any particular generation I think we may safely put on one side. Colour variations appear far more in domestic animals, and even, curiously enough, in animals not domesticated, but what are called parasites, i.e., living in human dwellings. Black cats appearing in breeds usually of other colour are merely examples of melanism. Melanism may appear suddenly as a complete mutation, as in the case of the Black Siamese: or it may appear partially in the case of animals partly darker coloured. At the other end of the scale, Albinism behaves in precisely the same manner. In the leopard we find complete and sudden melanism, as in the Black Leopard, or partial melanism, exhibited by leopards, a large area of whose skin, usually the upper half, is very dark, all the spots run together. A tabby with its dorsal stripes all blurred is melanistic: so is a black sheep: so are the wild black rabbits one not infrequently encounters when out ferreting.

I mated a tortoiseshell S.H. queen to my self-red S.H. male, and obtained one black male, one tortoise female, and one tortoise male—that is, unless the last-named proves to be something in the way of what Kipling calls a "giddy harumfrodite," as to which I am not yet quite clear.

H. C. BROOKE.

P.S.—*Unsere Katze* for the month gives a portrait of a Bonze, Lama, or High Priest of the Monastery of the Ten Thousand Ages, with a cat on his shoulder—a very lightly marked tiger-striped cat, of quite ordinary type.

"Abyssinians are on the small side, with sharp pointed ears and very intelligent faces, the tail rather fine and long. I think the day is not far distant when they will be even more treasured than the Siamese, because they are every bit as devoted and intelligent, but they do not strain the nerves of their owners with the terrible loud Siamese voice."

—From "Wind Harps," by Marion Cran.

"MAOW!"—A CAT RETROSPECTION.

BY C. DE MORA.

FOREWORD.

An Arab story tells us the origin of CATS. . . . When Noah had everything ready for the Ark, at the time of the Deluge, it seems he had somehow overlooked a most important addition to the menagerie, and that was the very necessary presence of the family CAT! and much perturbed became all the inmates, for many provisions had been provided for the enforced voyage, and how were the mice and other rodents to be controlled during this time? Therefore Noah's great family gently reproached him for his want of thought. With the cheese and corn, etc., etc., it was a serious consideration! Noah (the head and manager of this travelling menagerie) scratched his head in perplexity, but promised to see what could be done. Therefore, after praying to Allah, he waited to see what would happen. Suddenly he was told to look behind him. He did so, and beheld a large lion (one of the two 'stock' ones), which must have startled him, more especially as the said lion (at Allah's orders) sneezed loudly, and behold, from the nostrils of the lion sprang forth a full-grown CAT (another 'startler!'). This animal, belonging to the **Digitigrade** section of the order **Carnivora**, at once set to work on his future occupation, and quickly kept all mice and animals of the **Rodentia** order under strict subjection.

(MAOW speaks.)

"It was sixteen hundred and eighty-eight years before the Christian era when our effigies first appeared on the Egyptian Monuments. It was then that the CAT was named 'MAOW' (which indeed was just a copy after our own language!). We MAOWS, of much in appearance as our own descendants, were yet perhaps longer in **legs**, and indeed stronger on them, as we had need to be. For we had a great talent for hunting in the marshes, and could swim the waters, and so catching the wild duck, which abounded here, we would bring them back in our mouths, struggle as they might, and lay them at the master's feet. Then, he taking them, would quickly dispatch them. . . . Ah! we were as much service **then** in sport as our arch-enemy, the **CANIS**, or dog, is now! But we were certainly a larger and wilder breed in those first days of the World. Herodotus, the Greek (called the Father of History), did most shamefully declare that 'we devoured our own offspring, as we insisted on **all** our wife's attention.' It was a libel, and not wholly deserved. Also did he say that we MAOWS at times committed suicide by throwing ourselves into the flames if our homes caught fire, and thus perished in our own funeral pyre. Also did he say that when such a terrible thing came to pass, universal sorrow seized the family, who waved off their eyebrows as a sign of grief, so greatly they mourn us. Yet, indeed, one would think

that the loss of one's home and possessions would have been a greater cause of trouble and sorrow! but, as we were considered sacred, and most beloved of the Egyptians, and in Death were embalmed, as witness, in your own great Museum of London, where these same remains can be seen, in great glass cases or cupboards. . . Aye! we were sacred to the Goddess **PASHT**, or **BUBASTIS**, who wore the head of a cat as a sign. In her temples of the Holy City of **Bubastis** we led happy lives, well tended, and calm luxurious lives. Who does not remember how Cambyses stormed Memphis with the sacred bodies of the MAOWS?—which sacrilege caused the city to surrender at once? Also, any person wilfully slaying one of us was stoned to death by an indignant populace. We have been mentioned by many celebrated writers. Did not even **Pliny** and **Palladius** speak of us in their papyrus rolls? We MAOWS (I like not the new name CAT) have ever been bird fanciers, and in Pompeian mosaics we were represented with birds in our mouths. Also Agathias (of Justinian's time) wrote of us. Yet did put another libel about us, swearing that we killed his tame partridge—indeed, whether or no, I know not. Yet **Damocharis** called us one of the dogs of the famous hunter Actaeon, so useful were we then in that sport. . . Time went on, and the so-called 'Middle Ages' arrived. Then we were **indeed** most spitefully used, and held to be exponents of darkness, and the Black Cat especially regarded as an imp of the devil; and in place of being worshipped we were now execrated! It is thus the fickle world doth change—and ideas with it. It was given out that we haunted blood-stained castles; no witch existed without her familiar Black **Cat**, and hairs from the Black Cat's tail were ever mixed in her talismans. They have a saying in Russia that a Black Cat becomes a devil after seven years. Yet it seems to me that these Bolsheviks are far more devils than ever **we** could become! Again, the French declare that if a bachelor tread on the Black Cat's tail he will not in that same year marry the girl of his fancy. For some, we have been objects of inexplicable horror and dislike; some are unable to sit in the same room with one of **us** in it! There is that tale of the great Napoleon. . . After the victory at Wagram he stopped at a place for a night at **Schonbrunn**, which belonged to the conqueror of Austria. In the middle of the night cries of horror and fear were heard coming from Napoleon's tent. An equerry rushed to his master's aid, and entering the tent hastily, found this celebrated Emperor of France, and the dread of the world, but half-dressed, and striking out in fear at something unseen! What was it? What could cause such rage and fear in such an indomitable soul? The Emperor then pointed a trembling finger towards the bed. What **could** it be! Some unseen enemy, some secret assassin? Nay, it was but one of **us**. a frightened CAT, trembling behind the drapery, and

as scared as the great little Man himself. 'A cat may look at the King,' they say, and cause him trouble in doing so! . . . We were first brought to England by merchants from Cyprus, who traded with the Britons for fur. It is said that we can see in the dark. Another fallacy, for we cannot **see** in the darkness, though our eyes shine. But we can **feel** with our whiskers, and our sure-footedness makes us agile. Yet in the dusk we see better than you humans.

* * * * *

'But now I love to dwell on the golden days of our race—of those priceless times when we lived in the sacred temples of the Goddess **Bubastis**; tended and beloved, and when we left this 'hour' we were embalmed, and placed in honourable tombs. Even if we did not pass our lives in those great buildings (sacred to **Her**) we were treated ever, in the Holy City of **Bubastis**, with honour and veneration. Ah, glorious care-free days, of **CAT** happiness. . . In later ages we were to know calumny, and sometimes evil treatment. 'To fight like the Kilkenny cats.' For it was said that two Irish cats fought to the death, and so violently that each swallowed the other, and that only two tails were left sticking out, but, 'Shure!' it is but a tale from the Emerald Isle, after all! Your Shakespeare speaks of 'Letting I dare not, wait upon I would, like the poor cat i' the adage,' which is 'the cat loves sport, but does not like to wet her paws'—and **that** comes in 'Macbeth.' So it seems we have been written of by many writers, in every age! Hated, beloved, sworn at, and caressed, such has been our lot. We are domesticated pets now, and we no longer are trained to hunt, except 'on Our Own.' . . . So do I sit and dream before the beloved, and ever comforting fire in my Wimbledon home. As I, MAOW, stare into the red glow, my cat soul once more creeps back to the beginning of **TIME**. Again, I see myself (as one of our race) basking in the courtyards of the great Egyptian Temples; honoured, and made much of, as one of the treasures of the adored **Bubastis**. . . Time goes on, and I behold new religions, and a Greater **ONE** than the ancient Gods rules in the hearts of men. I see now our embalmed bodies desecrated and mocked by other **peoples**, and the grand and wonderful Temples, crumbling into perishable dust. . . I see the Roman Eagles dip their beaks of blood into the conquered heart of the World. Yet **they**, too, pass away, and later, a greater nation (more powerful than Egypt herself) doth rule the Earth, and fashion all customs! Once more I see our race treated well (but only as homely, useful pets, and domesticated creatures), and superstition and cruel fables are but laughed at, and we have no fear, and I (descendant of the MAOWS of ancient times) live content, and unmolested. As I sit and bask in the sun, in summer, in my own corner of our garden, or doze happily before the red fire of winter, I am peacefully and

dreamily satisfied, for in the simple uneventful PRESENT I then lose all remembrance of the great, but lest restful, PAST. So do I, MAOW, bid you FAREWELL.

8, Denmark Avenue, Wimbledon, S.W. 19.

INTOXICATED CATS.

From an American paper.

Cats get so intoxicated from catnip that they fall down and go through the antics of a drunken person, according to a young woman whose half-grown kitten was given a catnip mouse for Christmas. "With its first smell of the catnip he acted goofy," she said. "He tried to tear the mouse open, purred, and cried loudly, pranced around, rolled over, and kept at it until he simply fell down. After a sleep he got up and started in his spree all over again."

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CH. TARZAN OF THE COTTAGE.

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