

CAT · GOSSIP

VOL. 4

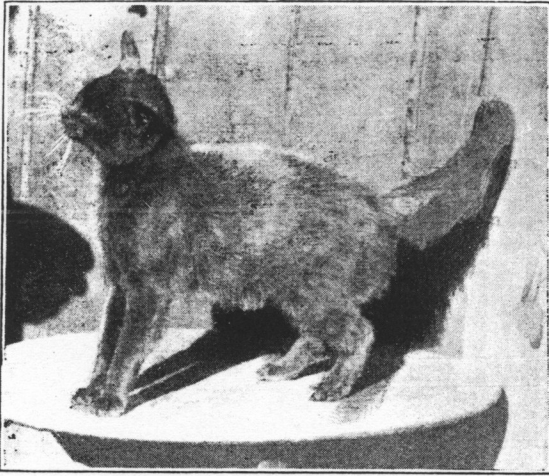
First Edited by H. C. BROOKE

Edited by E. K. WAKEFORD

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THE UNIQUE RED S.H.

Photo: G. E. LONG.

Is it exaggeration to call this the most remarkable Cat in existence? Perhaps not, for it would appear to be the only one on record. Enquiries all over the world have not shown that such a cat has ever been recorded. Many, it is hoped, have by now seen him at Croydon. For those who have not—he is all over, from and including whiskers to tail tip, a dark red colour, without any lighter shades, even on chin, and with no sign of tabby stripes even on legs, tail, or cheeks. His legs are very slender and graceful: an adult male, he only scales 7lbs. In the autumn the old hair becomes straw-yellow, the tail being always last to moult. He does not look such a "Struwelpeter" as in the photo, when he was bristling at sight of a stranger, also the loose old hair was coming through. Possibly he would be useful to breed S.H. Creams. He rarely "sits about" as do most cats, but paces or trots continually to and fro, and must walk miles daily. Nature appears in one step here to have produced what years of Fancy breeding have not yet obtained in L.H.—a perfectly sound unmarked Red Self. It is remarkable that the only other recorded Red S.H. were shown thirty years ago by his owner, Mr. H. Brooke, but as can be seen from the coloured plate

in Cassell's "Book of the Cat," these Indians were not nearly so sound in colour, though they created much sensation at the time.



NEAR FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Mr. H. C. Brooke, Judge of Shorthair at Croydon to-day, in full parade uniform as Fuchs-Major of a German Duelling Corps.

Lieber als des Hofrath's Lehren
War mir stets der Schlaeger Klang,
Wer wird eitle Worte hoeren
Den des Burschen Geist durchdrang?

NATURALIST — Duellist — Fancier — Sportsman —
Journalist—International Judge—such have been

the principal life's activities of the subject of these notes. Descendant of a line of lawyers, he must be either a "throw-back" or an absolute mutation from type. From the earliest childhood his one interest was in animals. Educated first at King's College, in the Strand, he already, when other boys keep white mice and guinea pigs, had many kinds of foreign reptiles, weasels, polecats, and even a half-bred Wild Cat, by Lord Lilford's old Spanish cat, which lived so many years at the Zoo, out of the tortoise-and-white queen to which the old cat always remained faithful, even after her death. Sent then to a school in the country, his first terms were bitter as death, because he absolutely refused—with a strength of mind uncommon in a young boy—to play any games (except paper-chases, of which he was very fond), even though bullied and dragged by main force to the football field and tied to the roller when games were in progress. Happily a new headmaster, himself a sportsman, could sympathise with a lad whose mentality rose beyond the "muddied oaf"* act, and he was allowed to spend all his free time in natural history pursuits or in following the Harriers, and even kept a few hounds himself, besides various strange pets. But the manner in which, when a weak and purblind youth, he had been bullied, gave his character a bias which has lasted ever since, and not until sent to finish his education abroad did he find amongst the fighting students of Germany real companionship and brotherhood. For centuries these students have formed a network of corporations absolutely "sui generis," and on more than one occasion left their mark on history. Not overgrown schoolboys, compelled to "clock-in," attend chapels, and so forth, they enjoy absolute freedom, and are subjected only to **their own** strict rules, partly somewhat Freemasonlike. To these fighting clubs have belonged many of Germany's leading men—to mention only the great Bismarck in last century and Dr. Stresemann in this. "Ragging" or personal indignities are unknown, and if attempted would lead to deadly encounters, and rightly so. The insular ignorance of the customs of neighbouring countries so prevalent here has led to most extraordinary misapprehensions about them and their duels, as when recently a writer in the "Daily Mail" gravely stated that the loser of a duel has to stand still whilst the victor slashes his face—an absolutely absurd fabrication. Others again place these duels on a par with those fought "in another place," which are often ended by the first blood drawn. Whereas even the "arranged" meetings between members of rival bodies last for fifteen or twenty-five minutes, unless stopped by the doctors, and a man may receive half a dozen wounds—a splintered skull, for instance, does not necessarily mean "stop" (as Mr. Brooke's skull can testify), though the severing of the tem-

poral artery does. It is not permitted to "duck" the head to avoid a blow—if it cannot be warded off with the sword it must be allowed to land without being avoided: to "duck" would mean a warning, and three warnings would mean being suspended, or perhaps entirely removed from the club's membership. In sabre duels the combatants, stripped to the waist, protected only by a silken throat bandage and iron spectacles, fight with curved 32-inch blades, sharpened like razors, for 25 minutes, or until one is incapacitated or received an injury considered by the doctors dangerous to life: in one of Mr. Brooke's duels with a notorious Russian the duel only lasted 2½ minutes, he being the loser, receiving two terrific gashes in the sword-arm, which severed the muscles and caused the sabre to fall from his hand, whilst the Russian winner lost half one cheek and received a severe slash over the breast. In various encounters Mr. Brooke received ten other wounds, including a pistol bullet through the thigh, and underwent on one occasion honourable "Festungshaft"—or fortress imprisonment. In the society of these "commilitonen," of professors and Army officers, he spent the seven best years of his life, speaking during five years not one English word, amongst those who, in a world gone mad with decadent democracy, and sodden with commercialism, may be called the last dying survivals of the days of chivalry. His father's severe losses in mines necessitated his recall to this country, where he took up dog breeding. At a time when only one Bulldog Club existed, he helped to found what under his guidance became one of the most powerful specialist clubs, and ran as hon. secretary a yearly show at the old Westminster Aquarium, and, on its closing down, at the Crystal Palace. One of the early importers and judges of Griffons and French Bulls, he judged these and Bulldogs at various places at home and abroad. Then took up "Foreign Dogs," and in the 'nineties owned the most successful team of Foreign Dogs ever benched. With Mr. Sam Woodiwiss he imported from France the sensation of 1895, the Dogues de Bordeaux, those almost legendary gladiators of the Midi, who for centuries used to be matched against each other, and against bears, and bulls, and fighting asses, at the fairs. Just as the breed was going well came in the anti-cropping regulations, and, disheartened, he sold the whole team to America. In 1895 he first showed cats at the Palace, winning second and third in Manx to Mr. Woodiwiss's Ch. Manx King, with Kater and Katzenjammer, the later famous champion, a son of The Bulldog Cat, whose portrait appeared in so many papers when shown lying in the arms of a gigantic Bulldog at the 1893 Aquarium Bulldog Show. Ch. Bonhaki, the celebrated Silver Tabby Manx, which received Royal recognition, and Ch. King Clinkie,†

* Kipling.

† Later purchased by Lady Marcus Beresford.



at his debut the victim of one of the most asinine "bloomers" ever perpetrated by a would-be Manx judge, were other well-known Manx—the Indian Red S.H., the Wild Cats of various kinds, which also interested Royalty on several occasions, and the Abyssinians, were all well known to cat lovers of about 1900. The team of Wolves, including rare white ones, so often portrayed in the illustrated Press of about that period—a very favourite picture being one showing Mr. Brooke with a large grey wolf taking sugar from between his lips, two other wolves sitting on either side—were famous, and a welcome attraction to the Ladies' Kennel Association Shows. All this time Mr. Brooke was on the staff of one or two "doggy" papers, and a regular contributor to the sporting and canine Press of England, Austria, and Germany, usually writing over the pseudonym of "Lupus." Then came the Importation of Dogs Act, and although he succeeded in running the blockade with a few specimens, the strain and the expense were too great, and he gave up the most famous kennel of "Foreigners" ever known, and retired to the country to spend all his time hunting and shooting, holding for two years the Mastership of one pack. With the outbreak of war most of his securities "went to pot"; unable to keep horses or large animals, he fell back on rats, and not only won all the chief cups, etc., for years, but introduced two new sub-species, named after him, to science, and also bred colorations new to the "Fancy," supplying many Museums at home and abroad with specimens of rarity. And now, for the third time, the law, as if by "malice prepense," has "crabbed" him, and prevented his procuring any more of his beloved wild felines! Too old to hunt, in too poor health to do much shooting, what has he left? An adept in the doctrine of metempsychosis stated her belief that in previous incarnations he was a beast of prey, and after this life would once more incarnate as some wild animal. The doctrine is just as likely, and just as unlikely, as any other of the doctrines with which humanity persistently and vainly endeavours to account for its existence and future! It would, if true, certainly explain why from his very early childhood the howl of the wolf and the roar of the lion have delighted him with a thrill impossible to describe—as were it the call of the blood! why he has always felt such sympathy and love for the Carnivora—why the cat tribe is apt to go crazy over him at times, to such an extent that it is unsafe for him to handle the greater cats, however tame, which would be liable to rend him for pure joy, just as a cat will rend a "catnip mouse." And if the prognostication of the adept above-mentioned should be true, such a reincarnation would have no terrors for him in the day when, as the grand two-century old student song, "Gaudeamus igitur," has it—

(Concluded at foot of adjoining column.)

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

By the time that these notes appear Croydon Show will be an event of the past, though not of the very distant past. We hear that entries closed with 431 cats and kittens, and 1,132 entries, and that short-hairs were well to the fore. We offer a special prize to the subscriber who scores the greatest number of points at Croydon Show, so we hope that those of our readers who did well will immediately sit down and begin to reckon up their wins. As usual, the number of points counted for a 1st prize is 7; 2nd, 6; 3rd, 5; reserve, 4; v h c, 3; h c, 2; c, 1. Special prizes do not count for anything in this competition, as they are generally very unequally divided, and a winner in the Blue classes, for instance, may acquire half a dozen specials, while a winner in a less popular class may get none at all.

Miss Leatherdale tells me that her beautiful kitten, Lulu, has gone to a new home, where he is being thoroughly spoilt. On his return from the S.C.C. Show he was put back with his mother, and regarded the arrival of her new family with perfect equanimity, but not long afterwards he was given a room to himself, as he was to be neutered before his departure. He recovered perfectly, and thoroughly enjoyed his convalescence, as he was allowed to play all over the house and garden.

We have sad news from Miss Crossland, who has just lost her black shorthair, Johnnie, and now has no cats of her own. She says that "it is of no interest to the Fancy," but we think that most cat fanciers are as sorry to hear of the loss of a pet as of a well-known winner. The only difference is that a famous cat usually has a very wide circle of acquaintances, while a pet is only mourned by his own family and their friends, but he is often missed just as keenly. We hope that it will not be very long before Miss Crossland finds another pet to take Johnnie's place, and that he will live for the full span of a cat's life. Mrs. Oglethorpe is not able to write any notes this week, as she is living in a whirl of social events, and cats have to take second place for the moment. Long-Hair Lore will appear as usual next week, so the people who have searched the six pages of this issue in vain, before beginning to read anything else, may be assured that Mrs. Oglethorpe has not really deserted them for ever—and we hope that she never will.

"How I bought two Siamese kittens for 1s. 4d." is told by the well-known breeder, Miss Leatherdale, whose lovely kitten, Lulu, made such a sensation at the S.C.C. Show. Little Puma had six kittens, born three days too late. I gave the veterinary two females for his wife to try and rear by hand. The

post jucundam juventutem
post molestam senectutem
nos habebit humus!

next day two of the remaining four, which were delicate from birth, died in spite of all efforts to save them. Puma was very sad with only two kits left. Acting on my mother's suggestion, I rang up the veterinary, and said, "Give me back the kits I threw away," or words to that effect. He said, "I will bring them back for 5s." I said, "We'll send Mrs. Leatherdale

To fetch them away,
On a cold and frosty morning—

(only it wasn't!) So my mother found the two babies in the warm airing cupboard, very fine and fat, and brought them home on a rubber hot water bottle and a 'bus, yelling all the way. So for the 1s. 4d. 'bus fare I bought back my two three-days-old kits, and Puma was delighted. They were 24 hours at the veterinary's, and he and his wife and the maid took turns to give them drops of milk every time they cried, day and night. All four are doing well. The veterinary lives six miles away.

Mr. Macfennan, an Argyleshire farmer, is very proud of having a Wild Cat kitten, reared on a tame foster, so tame that it plays in the house. It is very young yet, and we shall hope to learn how it goes on. These kittens generally remain savage, however early taken. We have, however, known one instance, and one only, of a tamed specimen; this was three or four months old, and also reared on a tame cat, and was quite friendly. We bought it, but, alas, it died on the way over with five other cats and several martens, from seasickness, the crossing being made in the equinoctial gales.

"CAT REVIEW"—which devotes half a page to obituary notices of Mrs. Burl's giant Galantuomo—mentions that a cat in the States found a baby skunk, and was bringing it up with her kittens. Unhappily the skunk persisted in acting accordingly, and had to be removed: a pity, for the "stink-gland" could have been excised, and pet skunks so treated are pretty and charming pets.

BRISTOL FANCIERS' CAT SHOW.

It was not a pleasure to find the elements doing their worst in the way of a soaking rain on the morning of 6th November, as it meant many exhibits and exhibitors having a miserable journey to the Drill Hall in Bristol, where the above Show was to be held. The unpleasant conditions did not, however, damp the spirits of all interested, and a really fine entry of cats was waiting when Mrs. Cyril Yeates arrived to fulfil her task of judging. Last year the cat section of the Bristol Fanciers' Show came very near to a fiasco, but by excellent and energetic canvassing, mainly on the part of Mrs. F. H. Stevens, of Hanham Court, over 150 cats were on show yesterday! So that Mrs. Yeates had a long and arduous day, her enthusiasm certainly assisted her equally as much as did Mr. Yeates. I was, of course, mostly interested in the Siamese, and had plenty of time to thoroughly enjoy a "few words" with most of those present. It is a pity the Show secretary does not arrange to give particulars in the catalogue of the cats, as one has to guess whether a champion or a novice is being "spoken" to, through not knowing the cat's name. Class 274, Siamese Male or Female Adult—1st. Miss C. M. Williams' Maeltomis I did not like so well as 2nd, Mrs. Allen Maturin's well-known Kitya-Nama, whose coat and eyes seemed much better than the winner. I am sure Mrs. Yeates must have had good reason, though, for reversing her opinion on the same cats at Portsmouth a fortnight previously. 3rd, Mrs. Cates' Pekois, very good deep blue eyes, good head; equal 3rd, my wife's Greenway Cecelia, who owing to an error in the catalogue was originally judged in the kitten class, and, of course, had to be struck out and rejudged with the adults after the cards were up in that class. Class 276, Siamese Male or Female Kitten—1st, Mrs. Allen Maturin's Neira-Nama, a very handsome kitten of good type, that should do well at some of the forthcoming championship shows. 2nd, Miss Crawford's Delphi, good head and eyes, pale coat, well shown. 3rd, Miss Williams' Rag-Tag, a charming kitten, but very small for its age. Class 276a, Short-hair Kittens, any colour or sex—1st and 2nd repeats for 276. 3rd, a red tabby, who was not in very good show form. Owing to much confusion in this class, which was omitted from the catalogue, these placings may have been altered. Many well-known cats were penned in other breeds, and great credit is due to all those who helped to make the Show such a success. Next year it is hoped to do better still, and bring back to Bristol its name for having one of the biggest Cat Shows in the West of England.

THEO F. MEGROZ

"ADDY-PADDY."

I have lately been terribly distressed to hear of the loss of one of the sweetest cats I ever knew. Woodrooffe Adwing was such a devoted mother that she used to nurse kittens of all ages and of any Siamese parentage besides her own. She was the gentle companion of human babies, devoted to her owners, a fine ratter, and invariably sweet-tempered. A quaint, broad and stocky Siamese matron, with a delightful kink in her tail, which she used to wag in playful moods. Her voice was unusually deep and most amusing when she called attention to the fact that one was occupying her chair, or that you were to sit down and nurse her. I loved dear old Addy-Paddy as if she had been my own, and I know several other people who have probably, like me, shed tears over her loss.

P.K.M.L.

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CAT CALLS.

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

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF EYE-COLOUR.

To the Editor, "Cat Gossip."

Mr. Yeates, I see, takes great pains to disprove my suggestion as to what some judges might do if having to choose between a well-marked cat with standard incorrect eye colour, and a less well-marked one with orthodox eye, and quotes the scale of points. All the same, he fails to convince me: the scale of points, I fancy, is rarely brought into practical use by a busy judge at a big show; time would not allow. I referred to the standard, not to the scale. In a case where the standard only says one colour for eye to total exclusion of any other, I can quite conceive some judges rejecting the good cat with unorthodox eye-colour. In the case of weak judges, too, what a blessing to them may it be to be able to fall back on the "light chin" or "wrong eye" fetish! So much easier to judge on than markings. In some breeds eye-colour must be called an essential property—as in Blue Persians and Siamese. In others it is quite, really, an unessential property—the fact that so many fanciers of repute favour the unorthodox proves this—and in such cases what a pity to risk good cats being turned down for an unessential property. Time alone would show if Mr. Yeates' prophecy as to "mixed eye-colour" would come true. Such mixed eye-colours exist already. I do consider in such cases it would be better to describe eye-colour as (for instance): "Eye to be emerald, green, or hazel, but a good eye of either colour to be preferred to a washy eye." I do believe the breed would be benefited thereby.

H. C. BROOKE.

BOOK REVIEW.

"Moira Meighn," behind which pseudonym is concealed the identity of a well-known writer, provides the latest addition to the cat-lovers' library in "Children of the Moon," a booklet containing 83pp. of quotations concerning cats from all sources (including C.G.), in poetry and prose. Some date back to the fifth century—Greece, China, India, and Japan, amongst other lands, have had toll levied on them by the authoress, and we only regret that apparently exigencies of space should have prevented the authoress from dishing up all the fare with which we happen to know that she was provided. The whole of the verses about the partridge-killing cat of Agathias, recently referred to, appear, and we cannot refrain from quoting this delicious verse from the old Greek, the plaint of a lover who had refused his inamorata's request for a cat:

A little lion, small and dainty sweet
 (For such there be)
 With sea-grey eyes and softly stepping feet
 She prayed of me,
 For this through lands Egyptian far away
 She bade me pass;
 But in an evil hour I said her nay. . . .

(“Children of the Moon: An Anthology of Cats”:
 Made by Moira Meighn. The Medici Society, London and Boston.)

AT STUD.

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