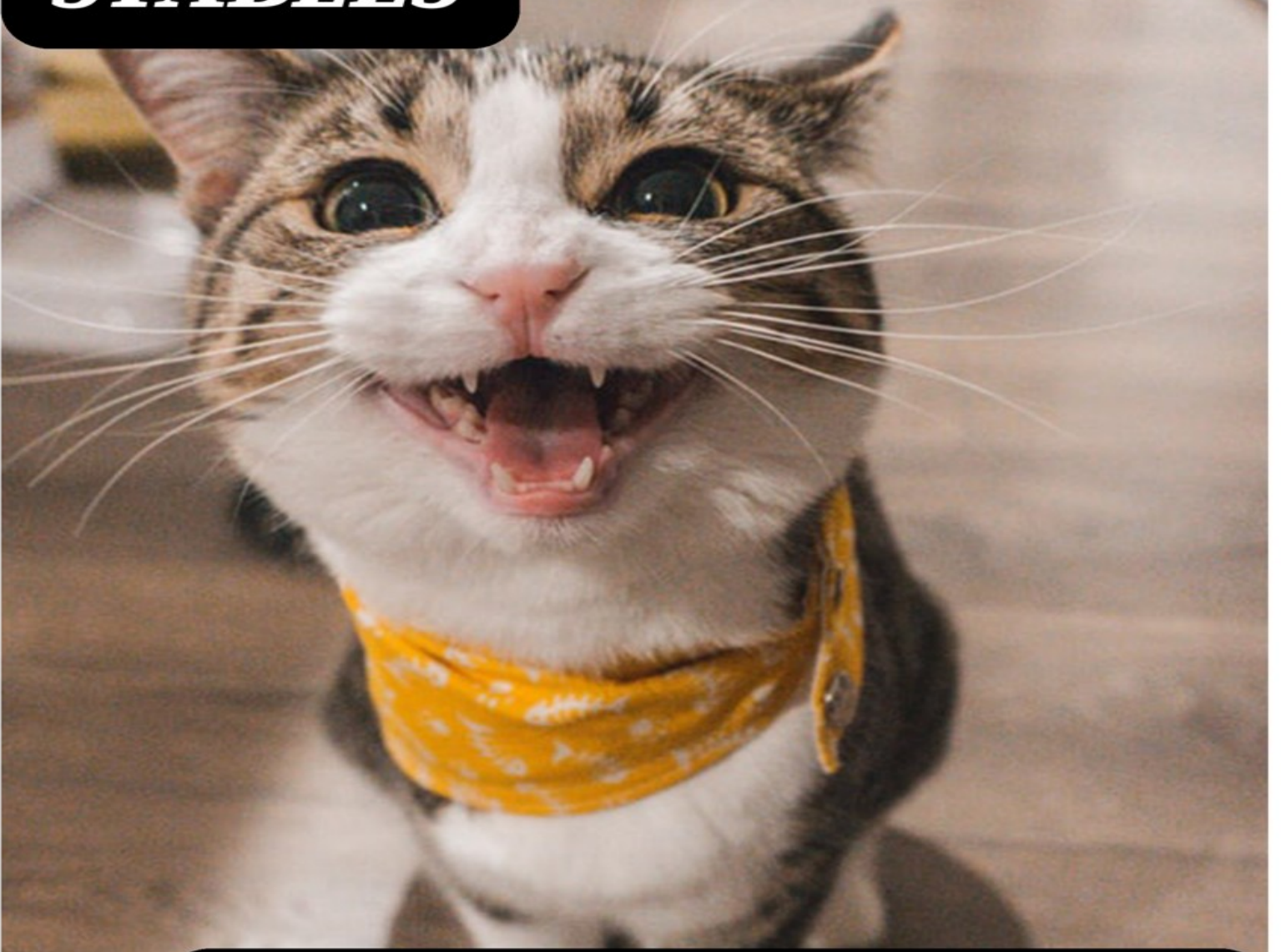


***GORDON
STABLES***



***CATS:
THEIR
POINTS
AND
CHARACTERISTICS***

Gordon Stables

Cats: Their Points and Characteristics

With Curiosities of Cat Life, and a Chapter on Feline Ailments

EAN 8596547237518

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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CHAPTER I.

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[See *Note A, Addenda.*]

APOLOGETIC.

“If ye mane to write a preface to your book, sure you must put it in the end entoirely.”

Such was the advice an Irish friend gave me, when I talked of an introductory chapter to the present work on cats. I think it was a good one. Whether it be owing to our style of living now-a-days, which tends more to the development of brain than muscle; or whether it be, as Darwin says, that we really are descended from the ape, and, as the years roll on, are losing that essentially animal virtue—patience; certainly it is true that we cannot tolerate prefaces, preludes, and long graces before meat, as our grandfathers did. A preface, like Curaçoa—and—B, before dinner, ought to be short and sweet: something merely to give an edge to appetite, or it had as well be put in the “end entoirely,” or better still, in the fire.

I presume, then, the reader is fond of the domestic cat; if only for the simple reason that God made it. Yes; God made it, and man mars it. Pussy is an ill-used, much persecuted, little understood, and greatly slandered animal. It is with the view, therefore, of gaining for our little fireside friend a greater meed of justice than she has hitherto obtained, of removing the ban under which she mostly lives, and making her life a more pleasant and happy one, that the following pages are written; and I shall deem it a blessing if I am *in*

any way successful. I have tried to paint pussy just as she is, without the aid of “putty and varnish;” and I have been at no small pains to prove the authenticity of the various anecdotes, and can assure the reader that they are all *strictly true*.



CHAPTER II.

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[See *Note B, Addenda.*]

PUSSY ON HER NATIVE HEARTH.

“It wouldn’t have surprised me a bit, doctor,” said my gallant captain to me, on the quarter-deck of the saucy *Penguin*,—“It wouldn’t have surprised me a bit, if they had sent you on board, minus the head. A nice thing that would have been, with so many hands sick.”

“And rather inconvenient for me,” I added, stroking my neck.

I had been explaining to the gentleman, that my reason for not being off the night before, was my finding myself on the desert side of the gates of Aden after sun-down. A strange motley cut-throat band I had found myself among, too. Wild Somalis, half-caste Indian Jews, Bedouin Arabs, and burly Persian merchants, all armed with sword and spear and shield, and long rifles that, judging by their build, seemed made to shoot round corners. Strings of camels lay on the ground; and round each camp-fire squatted these swarthy sons of the desert, engaged in talking, eating, smoking, or quarrelling, as the case might be. Unless at Falkirk tryst, I had never been among such a parcel of rogues in my life. I myself was armed to the teeth: that is, I had nothing but my tongue wherewith to defend myself. I could not help a feeling of insecurity taking possession of me; there seemed to be a screw that wanted tightening somewhere about my neck. Yet I do not now repent having

spent that night in the desert, as it has afforded me the opportunity of settling that long-disputed question—the origin of the domestic cat.

Some have searched Egyptian annals for the origin of their pet, some Persian, and some assert they can trace its descent from the days of Noah. I can go a long way beyond that. It is difficult to get over the flood, though; but I suppose my typical cat belonged to some one of the McPherson clan. McPhlail was telling McPherson, that he could trace his genealogy from the days of Noah.

“And mine,” said the rival clansman, “from nine hundred years before that.”

“But the flood, you know?” hinted the McPhlail.

“And did you ever hear of a Phairson that hadn’t a boat of his own?” was the indignant retort.

In the midst of a group of young Arabs, was one that attracted my special attention. He was an old man who looked, with his snow-white beard, his turban and robes, as venerable as one of Doré’s patriarchs. In sonorous tones, in his own noble language, he was reading from a book in his lap, while one arm was coiled lovingly round a beautiful long-haired cat. Beside this man I threw myself down. The fierceness of his first glance, which seemed to resent my intrusion, melted into a smile as sweet as a woman’s, when I began to stroke and admire his cat. Just the same story all the world over,—praise a man’s pet and he’ll do anything for you; fight for you, or even lend you money. That Arab shared his supper with me.

“Ah! my son,” he said, “more than my goods, more than my horse, I love my cat. She comforts me. More than the

smoke she soothes me. Allah is great and good; when our first mother and father went out into the mighty desert alone, He gave them two friends to defend and comfort them—the dog and the cat. In the body of the cat He placed the spirit of a gentle woman; in the dog the soul of a brave man. It is true, my son; the book hath it.”

After this I remained for some time speculatively silent.

The old man’s story may be taken—according to taste—with or without a grain of salt; but we must admit it is as good a way of accounting for domestic pussy’s origin as any other.

There really is, moreover, a great deal of the woman’s nature in the cat. Like a woman, pussy prefers a settled home to leading a roving life. Like a true woman, she is fond of fireside comforts. Then she is so gentle in all her ways, so kind, so loving, and so forgiving. On your return from business, the very look of her honest face, as she sits purring on the hearth-rug, with the pleasant adjuncts of a bright fire and hissing tea-urn, tends to make you forget all the cares of the day. When you are dull and lonely, how often does her “punky humour,” her mirth-provoking attitudes and capers banish ennui. And if you are ill, how carefully she will watch by your bedside and keep you company. How her low song will lull you, her soft caresses soothe you, giving you more real consolation from the looks of concern exhibited on her loving little face, than any language could convey.

On the other hand, like a woman, she is prying and curious. A locked cupboard is often a greater source of care and thought to pussy, than the secret chamber was to the

wife of Blue Beard. I'm sure it is only because she cannot read that she refrains from opening your letters of a morning, and only because she cannot speak that she keeps a secret. Like a woman, too, she dearly loves a gossip, and will have it too, even if it be by night on the tiles, at the risk of keeping the neighbours awake. Oh! I'm far from sure that the Arab isn't right, after all.

Pussy, from the very day she opens her wondering eyes and stares vacantly around her, becomes an object worthy of study and observation. Indeed, kittens, even before their eyes are opened, will know your voice or hand, and spit at a stranger's. The first year of pussy's existence is certainly the happiest. No creature in the world is so fond of fun and mischief as a kitten. Everything that moves or is movable, from its mother's tail to the table-cloth, must minister to its craze for a romp; but what pen could describe its intense joy, its pride and self-satisfaction, when, for the first time it has caught a real live mouse? This is as much an episode in the life of a kitten, as her first ball is to a young lady just out. Nor do well-trained and properly-fed cats ever lose this innate sense of fun, and love of the ridiculous. They lose their teeth first. I have seen demure old cats, of respectable matronly aspect,—cats that ought to have known better,—leave their kittens when only a day old, and gambol round the room after a cork till tired and giddy.



BLACK and WHITE.
First Prize—Owned by J. BRADDEN, ESQ.



WILD CAT (Half-Bred).
First Prize—Owned by A. H. SEAGER, ESQ.

Cats of the right sort never fail to bring their kittens up in the way they should go, and soon succeed in teaching them all they know themselves. They will bring in living mice for them, and always take more pride in the best warrior-kitten than in the others. They will also inculcate the doctrine of cleanliness in their kits, so that the carpet shall never be wet. I have often been amused at seeing my own cat bringing kitten after kitten to the sand-box, and showing it how to use it, in action explaining to them what it was there for. When a little older, she entices them out to the garden.

Cats can easily be taught to be polite and well-mannered. It depends upon yourself, whether you allow your favourite to sit either on your shoulder or on the table at meal-times, or to wait demurely on the hearth till you have finished. In any case, her appetite should never get the better of her good manners.

“We always teach our cats,” writes a lady to me, “to wait patiently while the family are at their meals, after which they are served. Although we never keep a dish for them standing in a corner, as some people do, yet we never had a cat-thief. Our Tom and Topsy used to sit on a chair beside my brother, near the table, with only their heads under the level of it. They would peep up occasionally to see if the meal were nearly over; but on being reminded that their time had not come, they would immediately close their eyes and feign to be asleep.

“Poor old Tom knew the time my brother came in from business, and if five or ten minutes past his time, he would go to the door and listen, then come back to the fireside showing every symptom of impatience and anxiety. He knew

the footsteps of every member of the family, and would start up, before the human ear could detect a sound, and hasten to the door to welcome the comer. He knew the knock of people who were frequent visitors, and would greet the knock of a stranger with an angry growl.

“Tom would never eat a mouse until he had shown it to some member of the family, and been requested to eat it; and although brought up in a country village, made himself perfectly at home in Glasgow, although living on the third floor. But poor faithful fellow, after sticking to us through all the varied changes of fourteen years, one wintry morning—he had been out all night—when I drew up the window to call him, he answered me with such a plaintive voice, that I at once hastened down to see what was the matter. He was lying helpless and bleeding among the snow, with one leg broken. He died.”

Cats will often attach themselves to some one member of a family in preference to all others. They are as a rule more fond of children than grown-up people, and usually lavish more affection on a woman than a man. They have particular tastes too, as regards some portions of the house in which they reside, often selecting some room or corner of a room which they make their “sanctum sanctorum.”

Talking of her cats, a lady correspondent says:—“Toby’s successor was a black and white kitten we called Jenny. Jenny was considered my father’s cat, as she followed him and no one else. Our house and that of an aunt were near to each other, and on Sabbath mornings it was my father’s invariable custom to walk in the garden, closely followed by Jenny, afterwards going in to visit his sister before going to

church. Jenny enjoyed those visits amazingly; every one was so fond of her, and she was so much admired, that she began to pay them visits of her own accord upon weekdays. I am sorry to say that Jenny eventually abused the hospitality thus held out to her. For, as time wore on, pussy had, unknown to us, been making her own private arrangements for an event of great interest which was to occur before very long. And this is how it was discovered when it did come off. Some ladies had been paying my aunt a visit, and the conversation not unnaturally turned on dress.

“‘Oh! but,’ said my aunt, ‘you must have a sight of my new velvet bonnet,—so handsome,—one pound fifteen shillings,—and came from London. I do trust it won’t rain on Sunday. Eliza, go for the box under the dressing-table in the spare bedroom.’

“Although the door of this room was kept constantly shut, the window was opened by day to admit the fresh air. It admitted more,—it admitted Jenny,—and Jenny did not hesitate to avail herself of the convenience of having her kittens in that room.

“Eliza had not been gone five minutes, when she returned screaming,—‘Oh, murther! murther!’ that is all she said. She just ran back again, screaming the same words, and my aunt and friends hastened after her. The sight that met their gaze was in no way alarming: it was only Jenny cosily ensconced in the box—the bonnet altered in shape to suit circumstances—looking the picture of innocence and joy as she sung to six blind kittens.

“Summary and condign was the punishment that fell on the unlucky Jenny. The kittens were ordered to be instantly drowned,—we managed to save just one,—and pussy sentenced to be executed as soon as the gardener came in the morning. This sentence was afterwards commuted to transportation for life from my aunt’s house; and it was remarkable, that although Jenny took her Sabbath morning walks as usual with my father, she never entered my aunt’s dwelling, but waited patiently until my father came out.” Jenny’s master died.

“Jenny seemed to miss my father greatly. She used to go to the garden on a Sunday, as usual, but walked up and down disconsolate and sad; and on her return would take up her old position outside my aunt’s door, and wait and wait, always thinking he would surely come. This constant waiting and watching for him that would come again no more, was the first thing that softened my aunt’s heart to poor Jenny; and she was freely forgiven for the destruction of the velvet bonnet, and took up her abode for life with my aunt, on whom she bestowed all the affection she had previously lavished on my father.”

Kittens, like the young of most animals—mankind included—are sometimes rather selfish towards their parents. A large kitten that I knew, used to be regularly fed with mice which its mother caught and brought to it from a stack-yard. Instead of appearing grateful, he used to seize the mouse and, running growling to a corner, devour the whole of it. His mother must have thought this rather unfair, for after standing it three or four times, she brought in the mouse, and slapped him if he dared to touch it until she had

eaten her share—the hind quarters; then he had to be content with the rest.

I knew of a cat that, in order to avoid the punishment which she thought she merited on committing an offence, adopted the curious expedient of having two homes. Her failing was fish. If there had been no fish in the world, she would have been a strictly honest cat. She warred against the temptation, but it was of no use; the spirit was willing but the flesh weak, and the smell of fish not to be resisted. As long as she could steal without being found out, it was all right, things went on smoothly; but whenever she was caught tripping, she bade good-bye for a time to that home, and took up her quarters at the other, distant about half a mile. Here she would reside for a month or more, as the case might be, until the theft of another haddock or whiting caused her to return to the other house. And so on; this cat kept up the habit of fluctuating backwards and forwards, between her two homes, as long as she lived. She was never thrashed, and, I think, did not deserve to be.

It is a common thing for a she-cat, if her kittens are all drowned, to take to suckling a former kitten—even a grown-up son has sometimes to resume the office and duties of baby to a bereaved mother, and is in general no ways loath to do so. There is a horrid cat in a village in Yorkshire, who, every time his mother has kittens, steals them, taking them one by one to the cellar, and eating them. When there are no more to eat, filial piety constrains him to suckle his dam, until she deems it fit that he should be weaned. He has been weaned already four times, to my knowledge.

If a kitten has been given away, and for some reason or other returns again to its mother's home, the first thing that mother does is to give him a sound hiding, afterwards she receives him into favour, and gives him her tail to play with by way of *solatium*. Mothers will sometimes correct their very young kittens; for instance, if it squeals when she wants to get away for a short time, two or three smart pats with a mitted paw generally make it go fast asleep.

The cat's love of fun is perhaps one of the most endearing traits in her character. Who has not laughed to see the antics performed by some pet cat, whom its mistress wished to bring into the house for the night. Pussy has been walking with her mistress in the garden; but the night is fair and moonlit, and she hasn't the slightest intention of coming in, for at least half-an-hour yet. So round the walks she flies, romping and rollicking, with tail in the air, and eyes crimson and green with the mischief that is in them; always popping out when least expected, and sometimes brushing the lady's very skirts. Now she walks demurely up to her mistress, as if soliciting capture, and just as she is being picked up,—“Ah! you thought you had me, did you?” and off she scampers to the other end of the garden. Anon, she is up a tree, and grinning like an elf from the topmost branches; and no amount of pet names, blarney, or coaxing will entice her down or into the house until, as they say in the north, her ain de'il bids her. Pussy's fondness for frolic has led to strange results sometimes, as the following will testify:—

In an old-fashioned house, in an old-fashioned parish, in the county of Aberdeenshire, there lived, not many years

ago, a farmer of the name of D——. His family consisted of his wife, two marriageable daughters, and a beautiful tabby cat. This cat was well fed and cared for, and being so, was an excellent mouser. Indeed, it was averred by the farmer that no rat would live within a mile of her. The house stood by itself some distance off the road, but, though surrounded by lofty pine-trees, it had by no means the appearance of a place, which a ghost of average intellect and any claim to respectability would select, as the scene of its midnight peregrinations. Besides, there was no story attached to the house. No one had ever been murdered there, so far as was known. No old miser had ever resided within its walls; and though several members of the family had died in the old box-bed, they had all passed away in the most legitimate manner. Old granny was the only one at all likely to come back; but what could she have forgotten? The old lady was sensible to the last, and behaved like a brick. She told them candidly she was “wearin’ awa’;” sat up in bed and in a sadly quavering voice sang the Old Hundred; then handed over the key of the tea-caddy, where she kept her “trifle siller,” with the remark that they would find among the rest two old pennies, which she had kept especially to be placed in her eyes when her “candle went out.”

In spite of this, however, the honest farmer and his family were all awakened one night by hearing the parlour bell rung, and rung too with great force. They couldn’t all have been dreaming. Besides, while they were yet doubting and deliberating, lo! the bell rung a second time. John and his wife shook in their shoes. That is merely a figure of speech; for, properly speaking, they hadn’t even their

stockings on. The marriageable daughters would have fainted, but they had only read of fainting in books, and had no idea how it was done. It must be allowed matters were alarming enough. Who or what dreadful thing was thus urgently demanding an interview at that untimely hour of night, in that lone house among the pine-trees. The bell rang a third time; and, urged by the entreaties of his wife to be brave for once and go—she did not say come—and see, John at last reached down his old brown Bess—it had been loaded for five years—and with a candle in his other hand, his wife holding on by the skirts of his night-dress, and the marriageable daughters bringing up the rear, prepared to march upon the parlour.

In Indian file, and all in white, they might have been mistaken for a party of priests going to celebrate midnight mass. No ghost could have withstood the sight of that procession. It must have burst out laughing, unless, indeed, a very *grave* ghost. When at last they reached the parlour, neither sight nor sound rewarded them for their heroism. Everything was in its usual place, and nothing was disturbed. A search all over the house proved too that the doors were all locked, the windows fastened, and no one either up the chimney or under the beds. So the mystery was put down to super-human agency, or, as the good wife termed it, “something no canny;” and they all went trembling back to bed, and lay awake in great fear till the cock crew.

For nearly a fortnight after this, almost every night, and sometimes even by day, the same strange disturbances occurred, and all efforts to solve the mystery were fruitless.

So it got rumoured abroad that the house was haunted. All the usual remedies were had recourse to for the purpose of exorcism, but in vain. The parson came twice to pray in the room. He might as well have stopped at home. Equally unsuccessful were the services of an old lady, whom her enemies called a witch, her friends “the wisest woman in the parish.” Things began to look serious. The goodwife was getting thin, her daughters hysterical, and John himself began to lose caste among the neighbours. It was openly hinted, that some deed of blood must have been committed by him, in that same house and room. Nor could his thirty years of married life and unblemished reputation save him. He had been *too* quiet, people said, and *too* regular in his attendance at church; besides, he had a down look about him, and, on the whole, hanging was too good for him. Some averred that strange sights and sounds were seen and heard by people who had occasion to pass that house at night, among other things a light gliding about in the copse-wood. No, they would not believe it was only John locking up the stable; and the devil himself, in the shape of a fox, was seen at early morning coming directly from the house. Of course the devil had a fine fat hen over his shoulders, but that had nothing to do with the matter. Poor John! it had come to this, that he had serious thoughts of giving up his farm and going to America, when a rollicking young student in the neighbourhood, who did not believe in spirits—except ardent—proposed to the farmer that they should “wake the ghost.”

“Wake the ghost!” said the farmer, “ye little ken, lad. He’s wide enough awake already.”

“Wake him,” repeated the student; “sit up at night, you know, and wait till he comes.”

John turned pale.

“I’ll sit with you,” continued the young man. “If he’s a civil ghost, we can hear what he has got to say; for

‘The darkest nicht I fear nae deil,
Warlock, nor witch in Gowrie.’”

Very reluctantly John consented; but he did consent; and that night the two met in the haunted chamber alone, just before the old clock on the stair told the hour of midnight.

“What have you got under your arm?” inquired the student.

“The ha’ Bible,” replied John, in a sepulchral voice; “is that a Bible you’ve brought?”

“No, it’s whisky,” said the student, “about the only spirit you are likely to see to-night; and there won’t be the ghost of that left by cock-crow.”

So they waited and watched, John reading, the student smoking steadily and drinking periodically. One o’clock came, and two o’clock, and the candle was burning low in the socket, when suddenly, “Hist!” said the student, and “Hush!” said John. They could distinctly hear footsteps about them in the room, but no one visible. They were really frightened now. Then something rushed past them, and the bell rang, and there, lo, and behold! from the rope dangled John’s decent tabby cat.

“And the Lord’s name be praised,” said John piously, closing the book.

“Such ghosts as these,” said the student, “are best exorcised with a broom-handle; but, see! this explains.” He held up the rope, to the end of which—country fashion—was attached *a hare’s foot!*



CHAPTER III.

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[See *Note C, Addenda.*]

PUSSY'S LOVE OF CHILDREN.

The cat is more than any other creature the pet of our early years. Almost the first animal we notice, when we are old enough to notice anything, is pussy, with her beautiful markings, her well-pleased, homely face, sleek and shining fur, and soft paws, which she never ungloves in the presence of childhood. Children and cats, especially young ones, have so very much in common. Both are innocent, sinless, and easily pleased, and both are full of fun and frolic. Children will often play with a kitten until they kill the poor thing. In the country, pussy's place may easily be supplied by some other toy; but to a poor little gutter-child the loss is simply irreparable, and she will nurse her dead kitten in the mud for a week. The way children use poor patient pussy is at times anything but commendable; and while deprecating the conduct of parents in allowing them to treat the cat so, we cannot but admire pussy's extreme forbearance and uncomplaining good nature, under what must be considered very trying circumstances. It is nothing to see Miss Puss or Master Tom dressed up in a shawl and neatly fitting cap, and lugged about as a doll, carried by the tail over the child's shoulder, or worn as a comforter round his neck. Yet pussy seems to know that there is no harm meant, and that the children really love her dearly; so she never attempts to scratch, far less to bite. All experience

goes to prove, too, that it is generally the child that uses her the worst, to whom pussy is most attached.

The 'dead playmate' is a picture you will often see in real life. I saw one not a month ago. A pretty little child, with round, wondering eyes, swollen with recent tears, sitting in the corner of a field in the summer sunshine. On her lap lay—among a handful of daisies and corn-poppies—a wee dead kitten: life had but lately left it. When I spoke to her, her grief burst out afresh.

“O sir, my pussy’s deadëd, my pretty pussy’s deadëd!”

There would be no more games of romps in the garden, no more scampering together through the green fields after the butterfly, no more making pussy a doll. She would go lonely to bed to-night and cry herself asleep, for pretty pussy was “deadëd.”

In the adjacent street to where I now live, is a fine large red-tabby Tom. He is a famous mouser, a noted hunter, and a gentleman every inch. He was faithful in love and dauntless in war. When I tried to stroke him, he gave me a look and a growl of such unmistakable meaning, that I mechanically put my hands in my pockets and whistled. He makes no friends with strangers. Yet Tom has a little mistress, not much over three years old, whom he dearly loves, and from whom he is seldom absent. He lies down on his side, and allows little Alice to lift him, although she can hardly totter along with her burden, which she carries as often by the tail as any way else. She sleeps beside him on the hearth-rug, Tom winding his arms lovingly around her neck, and little Alice declares that pussy “carries his kisses on his nose.”

Wee Elsie S—, though only six years old, has completely tamed—as far as she herself is concerned—what might almost be called a wild cat, it having been bred and brought up in the woods. This cat has only two good qualities, namely, his great skill in vermin-killing, and his fondness for little Elsie. Neither the child's father, mother, nor the servants, dare put a finger on this wild brindled Tom; but as soon as Elsie comes down in the morning, and puss is let in, with a fond cry he rushes towards her, singing and caressing her with evident satisfaction. He then does duty as a doll all day, or follows the child wherever she goes, and sleeps with her when she sleeps.

“In our nursery,” writes a lady correspondent, “there was always a cat, which was the favourite companion of the children, submitting to many indignities which a dog would scarcely have endured with so much patience. One handsome tabby cat, named by us children Roland the Brave, used to hold his place in front of the nursery fire, with the utmost patience and good-humour, in spite of kettles boiling over on him, nursery-maids treading on his paws and tail, and children teasing him in every possible way.”

“The tom-cat which I have at present,” says another, “keeps my children company in their walks, and is indeed more careful of them than the maid, who sometimes has forgotten her duty so far as to leave the perambulator to look after itself, while she is talking and laughing with a tall man in red. But Tom is not so thoughtless, and sticks close by the children, showing signs of anger when any one approaches. He seems, moreover, imbued with the idea, that the every-day food of that domestic quadruped, the

dog, is babies, and, if any one is foolish enough to come snuffing round the perambulator, Tom mounts him at once, and proceeds forthwith to sharpen his claws in his hide. On one occasion when my family were absent for a few days, Tom was so disconsolate that he refused to take his food. To show his love for the children, I made the remark to Tom, in presence of some friends, that baby was in the cradle; the cat jumped up and went directly towards it, and examined it, then returned mewling most mournfully because of the disappointment."

Pussy's love for babies is always very noticeable. In fact, with very little training, she may be taught, if not to nurse, at least to mind, the baby. I know a cat which, as soon as the child is placed in its little cot, lays itself gently down at its back; and this is not for sake of warmth and comfort, as some may allege, but from pure love of baby. For pussy lies perfectly still as long as the child sleeps; but whenever she awakes, even before she cries, the cat jumps down and runs to tell her mistress, runs back to the cradle, and, with her forefeet on the edge, looks alternately at baby and its mother, mewling entreatingly until the child is lifted. Contented now, it throws itself at the mother's feet, and goes quietly off to sleep. Another cat I know of, that goes regularly to the harvest-field, with its mistress and a young child. The cat remains with the child all day, guarding him and amusing him by playing at hide-and-seek with him, until evening, when the mother, who has only visited her child two or three times during the day, returns, generally to find baby and puss asleep in each other's arms.

Cats too not only mourn the absence of their little master or mistress, but will try to follow them if they can.

“A certain party of my acquaintance,” says a lady, “had a large cat called Tabby, who was a great favourite with all the family. Tabby seemed to reciprocate the attachment of the different members, but its fondness for the youngest daughter was something wonderful. It would follow her about wherever she went, and if she ever left home for a short time, poor pussy seemed quite wretched until her return. At one time the child went to reside for two months, with some friends many miles distant. You may fancy her surprise and delight when one morning, after she had been about a week in her new residence, in marches her dear friend and companion Mistress Tabby, and nothing could induce her to leave again. Pussy took up her abode with the girl, stuck by her all the time, and at the end of the visit faithfully accompanied her back to their home.”

A woman, whom I know, has a tom-cat, which watches constantly by the baby’s cradle, when its mistress is absent. One day, when hanging up some clothes in the garden, she became suddenly aware of an awful row going on in the room she had just left. She entered, just in time to see Tom riding a large shepherd’s collie round the room, and back again, and finally out at the door. Tom was a most cruel jockey, sparing neither bit(e) nor spur, as the howls of the unhappy collie fully testified. That dog hasn’t been seen in the immediate vicinity since.

The cat, mentioned in the following anecdote, was surely worthy of the Humane Society’s bronze medallion, as much as any Newfoundland ever was.

A certain lady's little son was ill of scarlet fever. The period of inflammation and danger was just over, but the poor child was unable to sit or stand. Through all his illness, he had been carefully watched by a faithful tom-cat, who seldom ever left his bedside by night or by day; for Tom dearly loved the little fellow, who, though now so still and quiet, used to lark and roll with him on the parlour floor. But since his little master's illness, Tom had never been known to make the slightest attempt at fun. One day, the child was taken by its mother from bed, and laid on the cool sofa by way of change; and when he had fallen asleep she gently left the room, Tom being on guard as usual. She had not been gone many minutes, and was engaged in some household duties, when Tom entered, squirrel-tailed and mewing most piteously, looking up into her face, and then running to the door, plainly entreating his mistress to hurry along with him. It was well she did so. Poor Tom ran before her to the room in which she had left her boy, when she found that, in attempting to get up, the child had fallen on the floor along with the rugs in such a position, that death from suffocation would have inevitably followed, but for the timely aid summoned by this noble tom-cat.

I think I have said enough to prove how fond pussy is of children, and how forbearing towards them; and surely this trait in her character should endear her to us all. But I do thoroughly deprecate pussy's being made a plaything of, whether she be cat or kitten. It is exceedingly cruel of parents to allow it, and is taking an unfair advantage of the cat's good-nature and sense. The way she is lugged about, and tormented by some children, is very prejudicial to her

health and appearance. It often does her grievous bodily harm, injures her heart and lungs, and stops her growth, even if it does not induce paralysis and consequent death. Let your children love pussy, pussy loves your children; only kindly point out to them the essential difference between a *plaything* and a *playmate*.

CHAPTER IV.

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[See *Note D, Addenda.*]

PUSSY "POLL."

The following sketch of cat-life is contributed by one who loves "all things both great and small." We give it *in extenso*.

Even supposing it to be endowed with the nine lives ascribed to the race, was it at all probable that I would be successful in rearing to mature cathood that dripping little wretch?

Such was the question, which not without doubt, I asked myself while attempting to dry a kitten, some two weeks old, which I had just saved from death in a neighbouring horsepond. Arrived at home, I put in practice as many of the Royal Humane Society's rules for the treatment of the apparently drowned, as I found applicable to the case in hand, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing my charge, comfortably sleeping in a bed prepared in an old cap, by the fireside. Not less successful were my efforts at nursing, and in a few weeks, Poll, for so I named my pet, had grown to be the daintiest thing possible; the very impersonation of mischief and fun, without thought or care, from morn till night, except that of—

"Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only kittens can."