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CATS AND DOGS.

Moods, Tempers and Natures of the Canines and Felines.

Cats do not take punishment as dogs do. Their tempers rise, and if struck they are apt to strike back, but beyond a gentle cuff to a kitten now and then I find a scolding or an exclamation of rebuke enough. They are also less intelligent and forgiving than a dog if unintentionally kicked or trodden on. There is no more beautiful expression in a dog's face than the look he turns to the friend who has involuntarily hurt him before there is time to explain. His whole demeanor expresses the highest magnanimity, not only the foregone pardon, but the eager desire that the offender shall think no more of the matter.

In many respects cats are more like men and women than dogs are. They have moods, and their nature is complex. A dog is very much of a piece. He is a good dog or a bad dog, brave or cowardly, honest or a sneak. The canine intelligence is much higher than the feline, but the disposition is simpler.

Cats are exceedingly irritable by temperament, sensitive to changes of the weather, to frost, to thunder. They are excitable and naturally disposed to bite and scratch when at play. There is a curious tendency in them, as in ill balanced or overstrung human beings, to lose their heads when in high spirits, and the self command most of them show when full grown in resisting these impulses is a striking proof of conscientious responsibility. A full grown pet cat scarcely ever scratches a young child, no matter how much mauled by it. Besides being irritable cats are moody and subject to depression, probably a physical reaction from the former condition.

With one exception all the cats I have known are captious. Their instinct when ill or sad is to be alone, but this is entirely neutralized by petting. They become as dependent on caresses and sympathy as children and much wiser than children when they are ill or injured, as they apply for relief with the most unmistakable suggestions, sometimes indicating plainly where they are in pain and presenting the suffering member for treatment. They are not so patient as dogs in taking medicine or submitting to surgical care, but show their recognition of its benefit by coming back for it under similar circumstances.—Temple Bar.

CHOOSING A BRIDE.

A Gay Custom in Russia That Has Its Merry and Sad Aspects.

An ancient custom is yet maintained in Russia at the Christmas season, in which the festivities of the day are made to play a permanent part in the lives of those who are chief in the frolicking.

Some person of importance in the district announces that the annual fête will be held at his house. Thither, at the appointed time, hasten the young men of the countryside; thither come, no less eagerly, but with decorous tardiness, the maidens of the place. There are dances and songs, games and feasting, but all else is but the prelude to the great event, when chance is made the handmaid of love. At the arrival of the proper hour the hostess gives a signal and withdraws into an apartment, accompanied by all the girls. The lasses are ranged upon long benches, where they pose, a tittering phalanx of freshness and beauty, with naught in their smiling affability to suggest that a scratch on blooming cheek might reveal the tartar.

The hostess is supplied with long strips of broad cloth, and with this she straightway muffles each and every maiden. She twists it deftly over and about the head until hair and features are hopelessly veiled; she winds it about the neck, the shoulders, the waist and on until the sprightly and lissom figure of the girl is merged in the rude outlines of a papoose.

This is the preparation. The action follows, when one by one, in an order determined by lot, the young men of the party enter the room. Each in turn approaches the veiled row of loveliness and examines it. Eyes and ears are useless; touch is everything. The puzzled suitor seeks to penetrate the baffling folds and locate the personality of his idol. When at last he has made his choice he is privileged to remove the swaddling clothes and behold the identity of his prize. Then is the consummation—the moment of rapture or despair when soul answers soul in the love light of the eyes or when disappointment speaks in the stifled sigh or shows in the averted eyes.

It is the law of custom that this twin should become man and wife. If the custom is broken a heavy forfeit must be paid by the unwilling person. But it is rarely that happiness falls in the result. Chance, it is well known, is open to a bribe. And the lovers who would fail to offer her bribes would hardly deserve happiness. In their whoppers before the hour of trial amorous conspiracies for the cheating of ill fortune are made, and the lover may depend upon his ingenious inamorata to convey to him the concerted signal whereby will be determined her identity and their mutual happiness.

An Unlucky Bungle.

On the 21st of December, 1885, Admiral Dundas gave up the command of the fleet and returned to England. He was succeeded by Admiral Lyons, between whom and Dundas a signal parting took place which will long be remembered as a standing joke in the navy.

As Admiral Dundas left the fleet at Kamiesch the crews of both English and French ships manned the yards and gave him a parting cheer. At the same moment, by the desire of Dundas, a signal was run up to Sir E. Lyons on board the Agamemnon. "May success attend you," to which Sir E. Lyons ordered to be hoisted in reply, "May happiness await you."

But though in real life hanging and happiness are generally considered to have no very close connection, yet in the signal code they are very much alike. Unfortunately, in the hurry to reply to Admiral Dundas, the flag for the former instead of the latter word was hoisted, and what was worse the stupid blunder was not discovered and hauled down till the whole fleet had seen and read it.—Pearson's Weekly.

A Good Excuse.

An officer of a certain regiment was one morning inspecting his company on parade when he came to an Irishman who had evidently not shaved for some days. Halting in front of the man, he said, "Doyle, how is it you have not shaved this morning?"

"Oh, have, sorr," was the reply. "How dare you tell me that," said the officer, "with a beard on you like that?"

"Well, sorr," said Paddy, "it's loike this: There's only one shaving glass in our room, and there was nine of us shaving at the same time, and maybe Oi shaved some other chap's face."—Pearson's Weekly.

A Step Saver.

When Mrs. Flatleigh chose the refrigerator with the mirror in the front door of it Flatleigh laughed. "Of course," exclaimed Mrs. Flatleigh, bridling at once, "a man has no interest in saving his wife's steps."

"Steps, my?"

"But possibly he can appreciate the advantage of her being able to get dinner half again quicker through not having to run to some other part of the house every time she wonders how her hair is looking or her apron behind or something!"—Puck.

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A CIVILIAN HERO.

He Served His Country as Truly as Any Soldier in Battle.

At the close of the Franco-Prussian war a hasty conference was held by the German leaders to decide upon the amount of indemnity which should be exacted from France. Bismarck, differing from Von Moltke, telegraphed to Berlin for a financier in whom he had unbounded confidence. The man was a Hebrew and was for some reason disliked by the great Prussian general. When, therefore, he gave his opinion that the amount demanded should be so many thousand million francs Von Moltke exclaimed impatiently:

"Absurd! It is too much!"

"I know the resources of the French people," said the financier calmly. "They can pay it."

"It is a monstrous demand," repeated Von Moltke angrily. "If a man had begun when the world was created to count he would not have reached that sum now."

"And that is the reason," interrupted Bismarck quickly, his eye twinkling, "that I got a man who counts—from Moses."

Von Moltke and the Hebrew tried to look grave, but both laughed, and the storm was averted.

The sequel to the anecdote has a deeper meaning. The financier, when he received the summons to the conference, was undergoing treatment for some affection of the eyes which required confinement to a dark chamber. His oculist warned him that if he obeyed the summons the exposure and delay in the treatment would almost inevitably result in loss of sight.

He was silent a moment and then said: "I think that I am needed. I have no right to consider my sight. I will go."

He went, and the results which the oculist had feared ensued. He became blind for life.

Von Moltke, when the story was told him, said briefly: "I wronged the man. He has served his country as truly as any soldier on the field."

Gold and Silver Bugs.

The most remarkable gold bugs in the world are found in Central America. They belong to the genus plusiotis, and one might easily imagine a specimen to be the work of some clever artificer in metal. The head and wing cases are brilliantly polished, with a luster as of gold itself. To sight and touch they have all the seeming of metal, and it is hard to realize that the creature is a mere animal. Oddly enough, there is another species of plusiotis from the same region, which has the appearance of being wrought in solid silver, freshly burnished. One of the most beautiful bugs in the world is a small beetle known to science as the blue hoplia. Its back is an exquisite iridescent sky blue, and the under part of its body is of a bright silver hue. The notion that it contains silver is widely entertained, and attempts have frequently been made to extract silver from it.

Turning the Tables.

"A Fort Dodge physician, a Dr. Pitcoe," said an Iowa man, "once had a grave dug for a patient, supposed to be dying, who afterward recovered, and over this error of judgment the doctor was joked for many years. Once he attended, in consultation with three conferees, another patient. This patient really died. After the death, as the physicians discussed the case together, one of them said: 'Since quick burial is necessary, we might inter the body temporarily. I understand our brother here has a vacant grave on hand.'

"Dr. Pitcoe smiled.

"'Yes,' he said, 'I believe I am the only physician present whose graves are not all filled.'—Philadelphia Bulletin.

The Spider Tree.

In the country about Cape Negro, in Africa, there is a curious plant called the spider tree. It grows on windy plains, its stem attaining a diameter of four feet, although it does not exceed one foot in height. It puts out two leaves six or eight feet in length, and these are split by the whirling of the wind into a number of stiff, narrow ribbons bearing no little resemblance to the legs of a gigantic spider. This resemblance becomes startling when a strong breeze puts the leglike leaves into rapid motion, and the negroes shiveringly exclaim that the great spider is struggling to get loose.

Macaulay's Wit.

Macaulay, who was in the habit of shaving himself, and badly, too, it would seem, once patronized a first class barber. After obtaining an easy shave he turned to the tonorial artist and inquired:

"How much do I owe you?"

"What ever you have been in the habit of giving the man who shaves you, sir," replied the barber.

"I generally give him two cuts on each cheek," replied the celebrated English historian, "but you, sir, being a superior workman, deserve to fare better."

Killing Wild Ducks in China.

One Chinese method of killing wild ducks consists in placing calabashes on the water in great numbers. After awhile, when the ducks have become used to the presence, the hunter puts one over his head with holes, so he can see, and, with the rest of his body under water, approaches the ducks. Seizing one of them by the legs, he quickly pulls it under water, wrings its neck, fastens it to his belt and takes his next victim.

Don't Scowl.

Don't scowl. It spoils faces. Before you know it your forehead will resemble a small railroad map. There is a grand trunk line from your cowl to the bridge of your nose, intersected by parallel lines running east and west, with curves arching your eyebrows, and, oh, how much older you look for it! Scowling is a habit that steals upon us unawares. We frown when the light is too strong and when it is too weak. We tie our brows into a knot when we are thinking and knit them even more tightly when we cannot think. There is no denying there are plenty of things to scowl about.

How Animals Doctor Themselves.

Man might often take from the lower animals a lesson as to the care of himself when ill. All sorts of animals suffering from fever eat little, lie quiet in dark, airy places and drink quantities of water. When a dog loses his appetite he knows where to find chiendent (dog grass), which acts as a purgative and emetic. Sheep and cows when ill seek certain herbs. Any animal suffering from chronic rheumatism keeps as far as possible in the sun. If a chimpanzee be wounded he has been seen to stop the bleeding by a plaster of chewed up leaves and grass.

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