



CATS AND KITTENS; OR, "IN DEFENCE OF THE CAT."

By J. E. PANTON.

Illustrated by LOUIS WAIN.



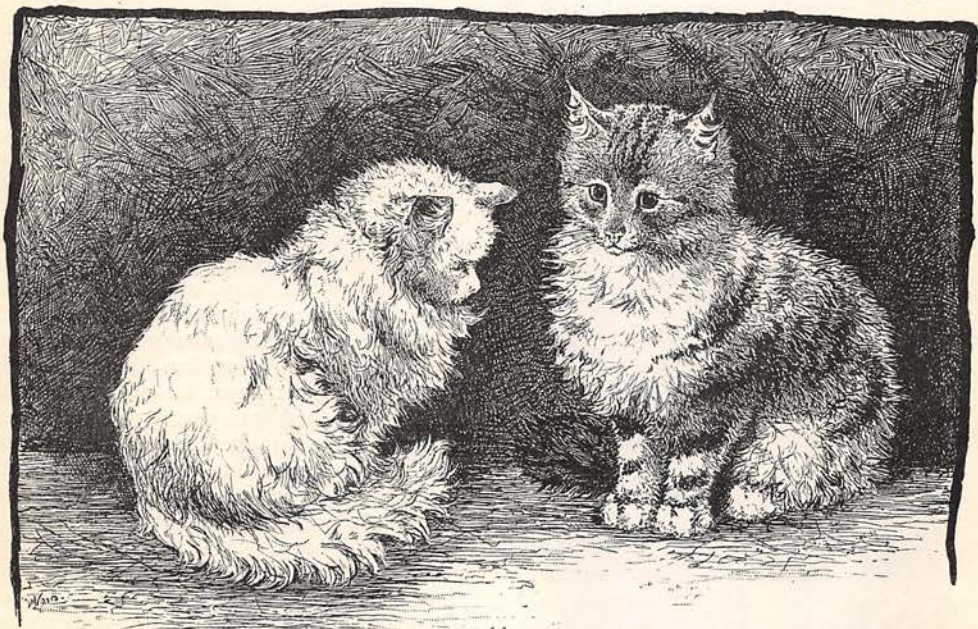
It is impossible to believe that those who so ruthlessly condemn the "harmless, necessary cat," and as ruthlessly demand its extirpation, or at least its taxation, can have ever studied the fascinating animal, or have even attempted to treat her with the kindly respect and warm affection that are the sole means of developing those valuable characteristics which make a cat a real companion, and which are never formed at all in the unfortunate specimen of the race who all too often spends an uneventful life of catching uncongenial mice in an equally uncongenial London kitchen.

It has been stated over and over again that a cat is not for one moment to be compared to the more intelligent, affectionate, and reasoning dog; that she (it is always she—please to remember that) is a time-server, has no real love for anything save her own comfort; that she is utterly selfish, never answers to her name, and that above all she is most uninteresting and stupid; and that except for mousing purposes she had better be extinct at once, for she is entirely untrustworthy, and as useless to the world at large as she is disturbing and destructive to gardens; and to the nocturnal rest of any who may be unhappy enough to have to sleep near a colony of cats who meet beneath the light of the moon, and discuss—not always in the very sweetest voices possible—the matters of state in cat-land, and make love, fight, argue, and no doubt obstruct the course of business, in the present parliamentary fashion prevalent among beings of higher organization than poor Puss is supposed to possess.

But again we venture to state that all this long catalogue of *cons* can be replied to emphatically by as equally a long list of *pros*, and that those cats who are selfish, uninteresting, and unaffectionate, come of a long line of misunderstood ancestors, whose wrongs rankle in their hearts, and have caused their descendants to cease to cultivate virtues which were never comprehended, and which were allowed to languish and die out, under the cold breezes of unappreciation; while we can point triumphantly to a score of examples on the other side, which will, we trust, prove conclusively, that a cat who is properly treated, spoken to kindly, called by its own name, and has its senses cultivated by an appreciative owner, not only becomes in every whit as companionable as a dog, but in her turn bears progeny that are in advance of their parents, and bid fair in time to develop qualities that have been denied the race for generations.

In the first place, who ever expected a dog to come at call, if the mere word "dog"—even softened to "doggie"—represented its patronymic? Why, the veriest cur in the kingdom would resent the rudeness, and would refuse to follow any one who denied him his orthodox cognomen; and yet stately Angora, beautiful Chinchilla, aristocratic Persian, noble Siamese, common or garden tabby and tortoiseshell alike, are all expected to know immediately that she and she alone is required when any member of the family calls "Puss," and is called idiotic if she merely pricks her ears and stretches herself again to sleep, refusing to believe that she only can be meant by such a

universal title. And on the other hand, who ever talks to the cat as the dog is invariably talked to by his master? Is he not consulted on the subject of his walks, taught to know his way about, to understand friends from foes, encouraged to show his feelings, and be, in fact, a happy, natural creature? while Puss is left curled up in her chair or on the rug, and though stroked and sometimes kissed is never really spoken to or consulted, or taught in any way to use her faculties, or to spend her life in anything save sleep, and an occasional stalk after a mouse, or a harmless bird; which she is as often as not punished for killing, regardless of the fact that she has only followed out entirely the instincts born in her, and which have been neither softened nor subdued by a course of education; such as teaching a setter or a pointer



PERSIAN AND LONG-HAIRED ENGLISH TABBY KITTENS.

to bring the game unharmed in his mouth to his master; and that causes him to subdue his inborn destructive faculties, and makes him simply obedient and quite trustworthy even during this most tempting opportunity of doing as he likes.

It is obvious that the present lowly state of the domestic cat is the outcome of the fact that the race has become so numerous as to be no longer valuable; for in the bygone ages not only were they appreciated properly in Egypt, where, as all the world knows, temples were erected to their honour and they were treated with reverence and affection, but in the time of one of the old Princes of Wales, who died in 948, says the nameless author of *Recreation in Natural History*, which is dedicated to "the ingenious YOUTH desirous of obtaining knowledge on the most important subjects," cats were of considerable value: the price of a kitten before it could see was fixed at a penny; till proof could be given of its having caught a mouse, at twopence; after which it was rated at fourpence—a very considerable sum in days when money was so scarce; while, as a farther proof of the estimation in which cats were then held, the author goes on to relate that a law was made by the same prince, who rejoiced in the name of Hoel Dha, or Howel the Good, which declared that if any one should steal or kill the cat which guarded the prince's granary the offender was to forfeit either a milch-ewe, her fleece, and lamb; or as much corn as, when poured on the cat, suspended by the tail, the head touching the floor, would form a heap high enough to cover the extreme tip of its tail: though whether this punishment was inflicted on the stealer of the prince's cat alone, the historian does not think it necessary to state.

The Mohammedans were equally attached to the cat; obviously because of their

Prophet's great love for the animal; who, as is well known, preferred to cut off the sleeve of his robe to disturbing the sleep of his pet, which had curled herself up comfortably on that voluminous portion of his attire; and in the time of the Prophet, cats were allowed to enter the mosques and were caressed there as Mohammed's favourite animal; while the dog that should dare to appear there would pollute the place with his presence, and would be punished with instant death. But as time went on, and cats increased and multiplied, they appear to have gone out of favour, except in the minds of old maids and venerable bachelors, who have always been fond of them, and have, no doubt, had more time than the generality of folks, to study their amiable characteristics and learn what delightful companions they can be when properly treated and really understood; and who thoroughly appreciate the soft, warm, purring creatures who are never dirty, never rough, and who are always willing to be stroked and petted in the soothing manner, that in some mysterious way is transmitted from the stroked to the stroker;



SHORT-HAIRED BLACK AND WHITE KITTEN "PETER."

and which has often in my own case resulted in bringing rest to an over-worked brain, and sleep to eyelids that had resolutely refused to close before, when Sam, our large black Manx cat, jumped up on the bed, and began his usual process of pressing down the clothes into a comfortable space for himself—a reminiscence, by the way, of the days when his far-distant ancestor, the tiger, used to pad down the high-growing grass in the jungle in order to make himself a lair which should at once be secretive and comfortable—prior to placing himself near enough to be stroked in the even and regular manner which pleases him best, and which as invariably sends us both to sleep in an equally speedy manner.

But we began this article especially that we might write about kittens, and at present have not said one word about these darlings, blessed with whose presence no house can possibly be dull, no one can be without material for constant and hearty laughter, and the veriest cat-hater—the individual who from lack of training in his or her youth, declares he or she cannot live in the house with a cat, and who "shoos" them remorselessly the moment they appear on the scene—has been known to declare that, given a kitten which would always remain in the kitten-stage, the antipathy would no longer exist, and affection instead of detestation would be given to the delightful little creatures.

Who, for example, could resist the fascinations of the two charming aristocratic kittens in the first sketch before us? The white Persian puss is looking half-asleep, and the long-haired English tabby (which species has the most perfect of all faces, surrounded by a soft fluffy gray ruff) is pretending not to see his companion; but in a moment the soft paw will be extended, the white paw will stretch out to give an inquiring or tentative pat, and in a second the two kittens will be scampering hither and thither, up and down the curtains, in and out of the chairs; one will hang on the seat, and tap the tail of the one on the floor, and finally they will both indulge in a regular game of hide-and-seek, copying the graceful movements, and often enough the absolute tactics, of a couple of children employed in the same game; until the spectator, exhausted with laughter and anxious for peace, catches up the miscreants, and either soothes them to sleep, or turns them bodily out of the room to resume their antics on the stairs, where presently they may be heard tearing up and down, and making as much noise as a small regiment of soldiers.

The white Persian is rather a risky subject, as a rule, for one to give one's affections

to. She is delicate, highly organized, and requires immense and constant care, and is not, in our opinion, capable of so much culture as the less aristocratic long-haired tabby. She is given to softer living and has few ambitions, and being quite content with a warm corner by a fire, does not discriminate as finely between old and new friends as does a kitten whose pedigree is shorter and whose intellect is quicker and more capable of being cultivated. Out of the several Persian kittens we have possessed none have ever really grown up, or lived more than a couple of years; we have kept them daintily and warmly, we have watched them carefully, and had what servants call "the best of advice" for them, but they have never rewarded our care by living to a respectable old age; and we have therefore come to the conclusion that we shall not attempt to keep them any more; for no sooner have we become attached to them than they develop some complaint, and either dwindle away to a small, miserable heap of



TORTOISESHELL, SIAMESE, AND RED TABBY KITTENS.

dingy fur, or die quite suddenly in the most heart-breaking manner. The long-haired English kittens are, in our opinion, quite as pretty, and certainly live much longer; their only faults being that they are virulent poachers and night disturbers—two faults which must be legislated for very young, for, if cats are properly brought up, they never wander about at night, but come home with a regularity, at exactly the same time, that is really astonishing: one old cat, for example, a regular short-haired tabby, which we possess, and which is the fourth of his generation we have brought up—his great-great-grandmother having been given to us by "Idstone" of the *Field*—always presenting himself at one of our windows just before ten o'clock every night, when he jumps in, makes his way to the kitchen, and at once curls himself up on his own chair, where he sleeps most comfortably until the maids open the down stairs windows, when out he jumps and takes his "constitutional" until he knows it is breakfast-time, when he comes in at once, and demands with a curious open mouth (for he is absolutely dumb, and has never mewed in his life) his ordinary saucer of milk. Now Max began by being a regular chicken-slayer and night-wanderer, but being punished severely and managed judiciously has overcome both faults; and no doubt all evilly-disposed cats can be managed in the same way if only trouble is taken with them in the matter in very early youth. Of course among cats there are not the numerous differences in breed and race that there are among dogs, and we have no such contrasts as, for example, exist between the St. Bernard and the toy-terrier. Yet that there are great

differences no one can deny ; the face of Peter, the short-haired, black and white kitten on page 452, being entirely different from either of the fluffy pets in the first sketch. He is square, and sturdier, has far more character, even if he possesses less refinement and beauty, and could be taught far more than either of the lovely ladies whose fur seems to absorb so much of their time and intellect, and who would be likely to grow up far more selfish members of society than such as Peter, whose appearance is not so perfect, but whose qualities would be appreciated by any real cat-lover a thousand times more than the mere good looks of the couple of beauties, who would, we feel convinced, utterly refuse to have anything to say to him. And yet it was just such a sturdy cat as this of whom we must stop to tell an anecdote which is absolutely true, and which happened to one of our oldest friends. She was going home through the snow one wretched December night, when she discovered she was being followed by

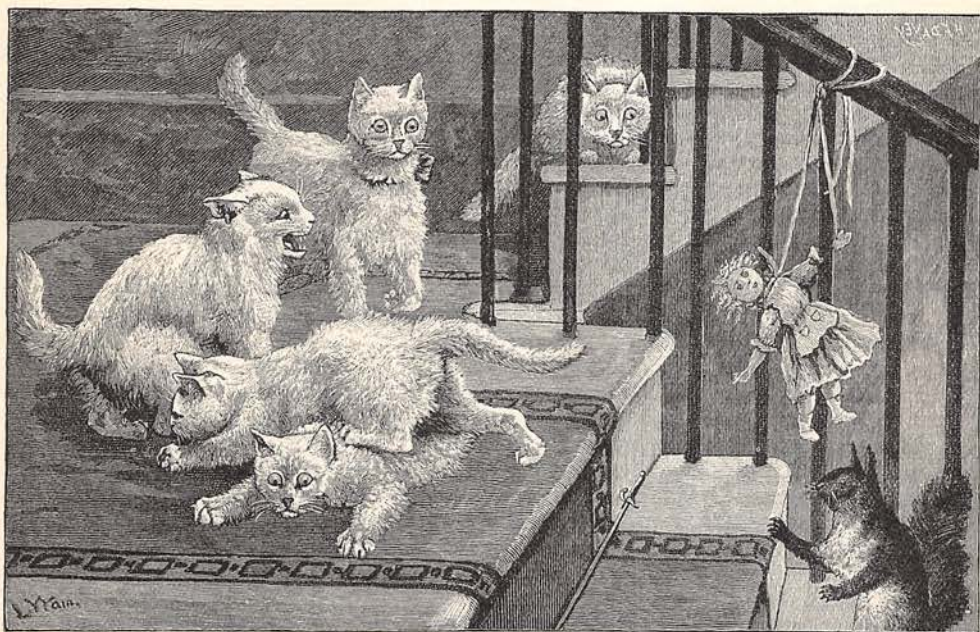


CHINCHILLA LONG-HAIRED KITTEN.

the most miserable little mewling cat she had ever seen. She carried it home, fed it, made much of it by her fire, and was rewarded for her trouble by seeing him develop into a square-shouldered, broad-browed, black-and-white, short-haired kitten. She kept it for a fortnight, and one day was told the creature had disappeared. She was in despair, and was on the point of offering a reward, when her maid came rushing up to tell her that Frisk had returned in company with a very beautiful gray Chinchilla kitten, which was wearing proudly a broad riband with his name and address on it, worked in gold thread. With a sinking heart Miss S. looked at the two cats and read the address : the new cat looked too polished, too beautiful altogether, to steal, and yet the square where evidently she lived was a good four-mile drive away. Both cats seemed absolutely content, absolutely happy ; Frisk purred as never before. Honesty had a severe struggle, but at last it conquered ; and putting both cats into a large, soft basket, Miss S. drove off, and discovered that Frisk had absolutely fetched the Chinchilla cat all the way to Miss S.'s house. "The fact is," said the owner, "Frisk, as you call it, is the kitchen cat, and we never take any notice of him, and we never encourage Pearl to do so either. I think he must have been happier and made much more of with you than he was with us, and he must have returned to fetch Pearl. We don't care for him, and you may keep him if you like," and Miss S. departed, taking Frisk with her, who lived to a great age, highly appreciated by all who knew him, albeit he made one more attempt to fetch Pearl, and being discovered with her, was punished severely and kept in a dark closet for twenty-four hours, until Miss S. could send to fetch him. He never went after her again, though he seemed at first to pine for her. She forgot him almost as soon as his back was turned ; in fact, her own mistress thought she never forgave him the long wet walk through the streets, finally landing her in a house in a far less aristocratic neighbourhood than her own, and in a far less comfortably-furnished abode than the one she had left. Frisk looked despairingly at her when Miss S. took him in her arms to carry him off, but Pearl was idly biting or smelling at a fuchsia, and bore his departure with great calm !

That cats are cruel is a fact we have perpetually dinned into our ears ; they may be, but we maintain stoutly, not more cruel than the dog who chases a hare despite its screams, the hound which runs the fox to earth, or the tiger which slays its thousands. Nature herself is cruel, so is all connected with Nature ; and a cat's cruelty is, after all, very mild, and is really caused more by her love of play than from her delight in pain. Sam, one of our cats, will chase bees, butterflies, and moths, the whole of the summer months, and we have never seen him destroy a single specimen of either insect. He will spring feet into the air after a bee, and will strike it with his paw and bring it down unflinchingly among the grass ; he will stand over it for a moment, give it a pat, and once more knock it down, should it respond to his gentle hint by flying up ; but he will then leave it alone and pass on elsewhere, continuing the amusement

untiringly for as long as there are any creatures to play with, the greatest amusement being found in the great cockchafers, whose buzzing seems to be taken for a challenge to him ; and it is most entertaining to watch the weird, tailless, Manx creature springing three or four feet into the air in the dusk after the cockchafers, never resting until he has caught one or more of them, releasing them unhurt once he has fairly captured them. But there is no cruelty here, Sam merely wishes to play, just as the three kittens in the sketch wish to play with the tortoise, who does not understand them, and is no doubt wretched—as wretched as a miserable toad the shrieks from which once roused us from our work, and we rushed out, thinking murder was being committed, to discover that Sam was playing in the conservatory with a toad, which did not enter into the spirit of the game at all, and which was yelling with fright ; for



WHITE SHORT-HAIRED KITTENS.

every time it hopped Sam put a black paw on its back, it would then scream, and Sam would remove his paw, only to repeat the same amusement at the next hop : there was no attempt to harm the toad, and evidently the cat's sole ambition was to see it hop, and he took the only steps he knew of to obtain the desired movement.

The Siamese cat is not often seen in an English household, as it too is remarkably delicate, and can hardly ever face a winter. It is of a particularly beautiful soft brown colour, and has black markings singularly like those of a pug. Its fur is shorter and less silky, but makes up in colour what it lacks in any other attraction. Its temper is not quite to be depended on, and though we have never ourselves had any specimens in our care, all our informants agree in confessing that almost any other cat is pleasanter and safer to live with. But we must own to hankering after a specimen, as we have been often and solemnly warned against Manx cats, while our own experience teaches us that it is by far the most affectionate and intelligent of all the cat tribe ; far more teachable and in every respect far more like the dog in its habits and in its capabilities of becoming a real companion. Sam came to us in a hamper by carrier, when he was only about six weeks old, and he certainly was the very funniest creature we had ever seen : his hind-quarters were and are considerably higher than the front legs, he was quite black, though, as in all young cats, the stripes of the tiger were visible in an intense light, and the soft black patch which did duty for a tail was so absurd that he was saluted with a chorus of laughter, which annoyed him intensely, and caused him to retire under a chair, where he remained until forced to emerge from his retreat by the pangs of hunger. He was never a rollicking, idle kitten like the majority of small cats, and has always taken life soberly ; he never ran after an empty

reel—he *could* not run after his tail, poor dear!—and his only relaxation consisted in chasing bees, toads, and other creatures, as related before; but he is the only cat of whom we ever heard that nearly pined to death the only time he was ever left alone with the servants, when all the family were away together; the only cat who knows when you are ill, and spends his days on your bed trying his best to comfort you; who knows his name like a dog, and comes running when called, and who is capable of keeping three big dogs in such constant awe—an awe that custom never stales—that they slink away appalled before him, and no more dare eat before him, or share his milk, than they dare steal or poach or bite, or commit any of the ungentlemanly sins so often ascribed to the canine race. When we go away to stay, Sam and Max go too: they never attempt to stray, they never attempt to get lost, they walk solemnly all over the house, then over the garden, and finally each selects a permanent chair, and, to do them both justice, their selection generally speaks volumes for their love of comfort. They have had three complete moves in their time, and have never even in the most uncomfortable moments of those moves given us the least anxiety about their welfare; and we never boarded them out, save once, when Sam ruthlessly turned out the cat of the house, and refused to allow him to enter his own domicile all the time he was there—a course of conduct which resulted in our being obliged to keep him ourselves, in all and every muddle, for he really caused acute misery by his conduct to the small mistress of the banished cat, who could not understand a stranger being cherished and her own pet being relegated to the stable entirely.

Sometimes cats are decidedly cruel. We had one, Wrinkleface by name, who deliberately and actually and with her own paws beat her first kittens to death. She was very young, and she could not understand why she must remain in a basket away from her adored mistress. She kept leaving the squealing little creatures, and at last we shut her up with her family in the tool-house, where later on she was discovered by us with three dead kittens in the basket, and actually banging the head of number four against the wall until the poor little creature was quite dead. The others had been trampled on, and we shall never forget the fiendish way in which she looked first at the corpses and then at us, finally leaping out of the tool-house and coming indoors as if nothing had happened. For months we never petted her or spoke to her, and the lesson went home; she became an admirable mother, although she was not always lucky, for a white terrier, whose ears she had boxed more than once, watched her out into the garden (we saw him do this ourselves), and then, rushing hurriedly down stairs at the top of his speed, he went and killed every one of that litter while the mother was out in the garden; and yet people talk of the noble animal the dog, and have nothing but abuse for the cat. Still there never was, we maintain, a clearer case of a meaner revenge than this! Cats are constitutionally brave, yet are undoubtedly timid: they will keep great dogs at bay, but an unknown object will terrify them almost to death; their fur begins to rise, their backs are arched, their claws come out, they make an admirable show of defence, but at last terror is too much for them, and with a howl of despair they rush wildly up a tree should they be out of doors, or career madly to some place of safety indoors, should they be suddenly confronted with any animal with which they have never made acquaintance before; while perhaps their most curious trait is the utterly inhospitable manner in which they receive a strange member of their own race, for nothing will induce the cat denizens of a household to be even moderately civil to any new cat or kitten which may be introduced to them without a stand-up fight—a fight that only too often continues for weeks, and sometimes, indeed, it is months before the latest arrival becomes really a member of the family, free as are all the rest of its privileges and emoluments.

We were once the proud and happy possessor of thirteen cats, all of which had been born on the place, and were all progeny of a venerable Tom called Tim, and of Wrinkleface mentioned before, and it was a most curious study to see how Tim kept his numerous family in order. We had in those days a very large garden, and as the dogs roamed freely therein, Tim and his family had a habit of taking the air on the branches of a large fir we always used to call the "cat-tree," and a more strange sight surely was never seen in any other garden than the dark wide branches each forming a resting-place for a white, black, gray, or Chinchilla kitten, while Tim lay solemnly out on the top branch of all, and woe betide the son or daughter that aspired to share that elevated spot! a box on the ears soon reduced him or her to order, and never while Tim lived did he allow any other cat to climb above him or share his perch: he

was head of the family indeed, and ruled the whole twelve, Wrinkleface included, with a paw of iron. A curious survival of some far-back ancestor used often to be found among these special cat-friends of ours, for, while both Wrinkleface and Tim had not the smallest evidence of blue blood in their appearance, one kitten in each family would be an almost perfect specimen of the long-haired English tabby, and once we had a quite beautiful French-gray, or Chinchilla-coloured cat—but only once. This cat used to beg like a dog, learned to open the door, first by jumping up at it and striking the handle until it turned, and then by standing on an adjacent table and stretching out its paw from that to the handle; he would ask to be taken for a walk, and would



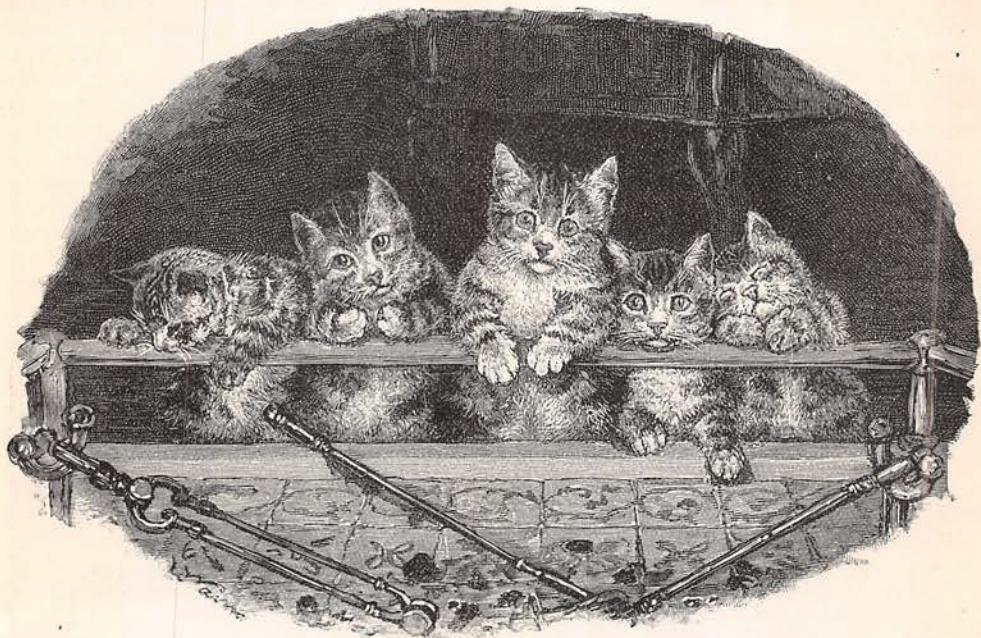
THEIR MORNING MEAL.

solemnly pace up and down the long garden walk, following his mistress as steadily as possible, and stopping every now and then to scent the white pinks or violets of which the garden was full in spring and summer—and, in fact, was the cleverest animal we ever saw, and our one regret is that, overdone with our thirteen, we gave him away, and had no real opportunity either of developing or watching talents which were so far above the average; but he never forgot us, and the moment he heard our voices in his mistress's house, he used to come rushing up to us, and purr round us, talking to us in a manner that was as pathetic as it was undoubtedly clever, and out of the common.

A winter's absence from our home dispersed our family of thirteen, and although they were left on board wages, and amply fed by the usual hands, they resented our absence, found homes for themselves with our neighbours, and when we returned prior to giving up the old home for good, we found that Tim had fallen a victim to his fondness for ambitious heights, and had broken his neck among the machinery of a neighbouring brewery, and that only Wrinkleface and one kitten were left to us out of all that goodly tribe. It was a severe blow; still, as we were emigrating to a much smaller garden, perhaps it was as well that our family was diminished for us; we should never have had the heart to do this ourselves.

We have found quite common cats produce one or two beautiful kittens in a litter among four or five quite hideous brothers and sisters, and when we moved to our present abode we experienced a very curious example of this. We found in the stables one of the plainest and hungriest cats it has ever been our misfortune to see; we did

not like or want her, but we cannot be unkind to any creature, and in consequence we fed and entertained her, and to our astonishment our own cats were quite civil to her. When she had been our property for some time, we were led to believe that she had taken advantage of our hospitality and had foisted a family upon us; but nowhere could the family be found, and we were beginning to think we had suspected her wrongfully, when one morning on the front door-step we found, apparently alone and unattended, the most beautiful red-and-white long-haired kitten, of quite six weeks old, that we had ever seen. We brought it in, fed it, made much of it, welcomed the beauty in every way, and wondered to whom it belonged; made all inquiries without any result, and after two days we named it, and introduced it properly to the rest of



ENGLISH SHORT-HAIRED TABBIES.

the family; and then on the third morning we were astonished to find a second kitten, equally beautiful, equally long-haired, but this time owned and obviously chaperoned by the stable cat, who as obviously had introduced number one tentatively, and to see what we should do, and then produced number two, believing, by the reception given to number one, that we should not resent her family as much as she feared we should do. But the matter did not end here, for although the stable cat now stayed indoors, and seemed quite happy with her beautiful children, we were attracted by the sound of mewling to an arbour covered thickly with twigs, and there among the twigs, and just like birds in a nest, we discovered two more kittens, but these were just as ugly as their mother, and had evidently been forgotten by her in her pride and joy at our reception of the beauties; or could she have subtly argued to herself that she would introduce the lovely sisters first, and then would have brought forward the others? However, her plot was frustrated, for we could not bear three editions of the stable cat, and reluctantly gave orders which resulted in the death of the plain members of the family.

If space allowed, we could tell endless anecdotes of Thomas, the white cat who lived to the honoured age of twenty-two, who went to bed every night of his life in a basket with a couple of blankets, and who would not sleep in them if they were the least soiled or dirty, who would literally scream with rage if his mistress went up stairs without first putting him to bed like a child, and who finally, when he found he was dying, dragged his poor old limbs quite a mile away to the stable of a friend to save his mistress the anguish of watching his last moments; of Peter, who plays games with her owners, and who can take a piece of bread in her paw from the centre of a napkin-ring without moving the ring, and who, despite her name, has constant families of

kittens, at which nothing will induce her to look ; of a family of four cats which have been taught by their little mistress each to wait their turn to be fed, as she sits at her table eating her bread and milk, and calling to them one after the other to claim their share ; and, finally, of our much-beloved Sam, of whom we have spoken before, but of whom pages might be written did we dwell at length on his curious cunning, his patient insistence on having his own way and securing his own comfort, his really passionate attachment to his mistress and to one or two favoured friends to whom he goes without a demur, curling himself up on their laps as a matter of right, his as passionate dislike to other people, and his detestation of anything like "company"—in fact, his entire resemblance to a crusty old bachelor, who is civility itself when no one interferes with his special arrangements, and who adores one or two old cronies, but is miserable enough should he be upset or put out of his routine.

We could quote anecdotes of other cats, notably of one, who, like Schwartz, attempted to commit suicide by throwing itself repeatedly head foremost from a high shelf on a stone floor, and although it did not accomplish its end, bruised itself so much that it had to be killed ; of another cat, who was put into a sack and thrown into the river to be drowned, and which, having found a hole in the sack, swam home, and presented itself a dripping ghost before the eyes of its outraged and frightfully alarmed master ; of another cat at the Wareham Mills, which used to sit and fish for the eels which were always to be found there, and which brought them out and ate them in the cleverest way possible ; but we fear we have already transgressed the space at our disposal ; however, we trust we have said enough to prove our case, and to enlist sympathy in the cause of this most misunderstood creature : if we have not, a glance at the trio of fascinating tabbies gazing into the fire must surely do the rest, for who could resist the inquiring eyes of the middle darling, or the sweet, sleepy fat ball of gray fur which is already giving way to the attacks of slumber, and is falling against his next-door neighbour, in a manner that will result in a moment in an agonized squall of reproach, and the probable administration of a "good pat" from the small outstretched paw ?

