

BITS ABOUT ANIMALS.

BY RUTH LAMB.

FRIENDS IN NEED.

"BROKEN AGAIN!"

I was looking despairingly at the window of our laundry in the basement, which was two-thirds above ground, and noting two broken panes, where new ones had lately been put in.

"It is the cats that smash the windows," said my youthful son; but seeing that he had just picked up a cricket ball in the immediate vicinity of the broken glass, I murmured something about cats with two legs encased in stout knickerbockers, as more likely to be the offenders.

But the lad, being thoroughly truthful, looked aggrieved, and brought abundant evidence to prove that, often as cats are blamed without deserving, they had undoubtedly broken the laundry windows again and again.

I should like to protest against the cruelty of those who, when they remove from a neighbourhood, take no thought for the poor animal which has perhaps been equally a faithful servant and a gentle and pretty pet. But they forget pussy until the last moment, and then find she has been scared away by the presence of strange men, and is gone out of sight and reach. Cats detest disorder and muddle, and a removal is the very acme of both these. The terror and discomfort combined drive them from their usual haunts, and so pussy is left, hungry and homeless, to linger on the dirty step, and look up with pitiful mewings at the door in the vain hope that it will open and show the face of a friend within. She gives up at last, and joins the band of "Cat Squatters," which loaf about houses, picking up oddments, stealing when they can, making night hideous with their doleful cries, and becoming, in their way, as dirty, ragged-coated and generally unkempt and disreputable as any human wail that ever personated a living scarecrow.

Our basement laundry was a favourite refuge of these four-footed vagabonds. They discovered it at first by means of a broken pane, and the iron bars within offered no obstacle to the entrance of a cat.

So they regularly slipped through the aperture, dropped on a large ironing table below, and spent their nights very comfortably.

Having experienced the advantages of such a shelter, our Squatters were not to be kept out by a mere pane of glass. No sooner was a window mended than it was broken again, and the cats became a nuisance, as well as a cause of considerable expense. At last a board was firmly placed in front of the new aperture.

As the family washing was sent out, the laundry was little used, and at times some days would elapse without its being entered.

Soon after the fixing of the board, our own three cats were observed to pursue an unusual course at meal times in the kitchen. Instead of eating up their share of food quietly, they would in turns seize a morsel and run off with it down the cellar stairs, returning after a brief interval.

The frequent repetition of this course attracted attention. The cats were watched, and it was found that they carried the morsels to the door of the laundry, between which and the step was a small aperture. Close to this they dropped the food, which was either sent through by a further push from without or drawn in by a little paw issuing from the laundry itself.

Then it was discovered that the fixing of the board had imprisoned a stray cat. The creature had been too frightened to show itself during the process, and its means of egress thus cut off, it would have been in a state of starvation, but for the charity of its feline sisters and their ingenious mode of con-

veying relief through the little aperture below the door.

NOT TO BE CAUGHT TWICE.

"A BURNT child dreads the fire," says the old proverb, and we had a proof, some years ago, that the saying applies equally to a cat.

We had a gentleman visitor whose usual breakfast was bread and milk. He was accustomed to bestow a share of this on a large black and white cat, of which he made a great pet during his visits.

Tom knew as well as anyone when the basin, with its smoking contents, would be ready, and always waited in order to accompany the maid that carried it to the breakfast parlour.

The very first time, however, that a saucer was filled with the hot bread and milk for Tom's special benefit, he rushed eagerly towards it, and of course burnt his nose and tongue. On the following and other subsequent mornings the milk was put down, scalding hot as before; but Tom had learned wisdom by one painful experience. He never even approached the saucer; but sat quietly down at a distance, and waited patiently for a sufficient time to allow the contents to cool. Then, marching leisurely to the saucer, he discussed his breakfast without fear or hesitation.

Tom learned a lesson of patience from one experience of the effects of over-eagerness after his good things. We might learn even from a cat's example that patience often brings its own reward, and that pleasures withheld are often kept from us in mercy. If allowed to follow our first inclinations, without let or hindrance, we shall probably pay for our rashness, and perhaps our pain will be of a deeper and more enduring character than pussy's burnt nose and tongue, by which he learned a sufficient lesson.

KNOTTING



It is interesting to recall attention to needle-work that has now become almost a lost art, but which at no very remote

date occupied the attention of the then fashionable world, and which "mighty queens have graced in hands to take." Knotting is now an obsolete art, but we find it recorded that Dr. Johnson gravely set himself down to learn it and failed in the attempt; and though he deduces from his inability to learn so small a thing that he is marked out for great achievements, the paragraph shows that the work was one well known in his day. Indeed, knotting flourished from the time of Queen Anne until the reign of George III., and is frequently referred to by the writers

of those times, the poet Sedley, when praising Queen Mary's diligence and virtues, adding—

"But here's a queen when she rides abroad
Is always knotting threads,"

and the writer of Mrs. Delany's life describing the exact pattern and style of the knotting she used to do.

Through the kindness of a lady who has some of the work still in her possession, we can describe fully how it was made and used. There is no doubt, when examining knotting, that our modern tating is founded upon it; while it is itself taken from the knotted point laces (*punto a groppo*), worked in Spain and Italy for church vestments from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The basis of these old points are knots upon strong thread, tating is but an amalgamation of knots, and knotting consists of a succession of knots made upon a silken or linen thread, and used either as a looped fringe or as an edging to *appliqué*, or worked in varied colours, and so forming the outline and shading of large flowers and complicated designs.

The simplest description of knotting is the fringe knotting; this is made with either coarse knitting cotton, or black or coloured purse silks, and as follows:—Wind the silk upon a tating shuttle, hold the end of the cotton with the left hand, and between the thumb and first finger, wind the thread round the fingers of the left hand, and put the shuttle through the loop thus made, withdraw the fingers (still keeping the thread tight between the thumb and first finger), run the loop on the thread up to the end, and make a second knot which runs up close to the first; work in this manner until all the thread is used up, and make enough of these lines of knots to form into a looped fringe, depth from one to three inches. A large knot is made by putting the shuttle twice through the loop before it is drawn up, as this movement doubles its size.

Edgings to *appliqué* flowers are formed by sewing down the lines so made upon the extreme edge of the applied material, and it was this description of knotting that was practised by Mrs. Delany, as we are told that she cut out from white linen leaves of various sizes, laid these in a design upon dark blue linen, and edged and veined these with white knotting of various sizes.

When silk knotting or other coloured knotting was worked upon a plain ground, and used to mark out and colour naturally a floral or arabesque design, the knots were made with a needle in the foundation material, and not sewn upon it. This variety is called needle knotting, and is managed as follows:—Trace the outline of the design, thread a needle with silk, and fasten it at the back of the material, and bring it to the front; put the needle into the material on the traced line and a few threads below where it came out, but put it in across the traced line on its right and bring it out upon its left; before drawing up the thread quite, insert the needle into the loop from right to left, and over, not under, the top thread; then draw tight, and make a similar knot in the same way a little below the first line. All descriptions of knot-making seem complicated, but this knot is very easy; the only movements in it to remember are putting the needle in across the line and not down it, and making the knot by taking the thread over the loop and not through it. Shade the flower by working lines of knots in shades of silk so as to mark out the shape of the flower in the same way as in crewel work, and work single knots where light shading only is required, and fill in with a number of closely knotted lines for heavy shading.

By following these directions the knotting of the eighteenth century can be reproduced.

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