



ANECDOTES OF THE CAT.

THE cat belongs to the same natural family as the lion, tiger, panther, leopard, puma, serval, ocelot, and lynx. The tribe is perhaps one of the best defined in zoology, all its members having characteristics of structure and habit not to be confounded with those of other animals. Every reader must be familiar with the forms of the tiger and domestic cat, and these may be taken as types of the family. The rounded head and pointed ears, the long lithe body, covered with fine silky hair, and often beautifully marked, the silent stealthy step, occasioned by treading only on the fleshy ball of the foot, the sharp retractile claws, the large lustrous eyes, capable, from the expansive power of the pupil, of seeing in the dark, the whiskered lip, the trenchant carnivorous teeth, and the tongue covered with recurved bony prickles, are common to all.

In their habits and manner of life they are equally akin. They inhabit the forest and the brake, sleeping away the greater part of their time, and only visiting the glade and open plain when pressed by hunger. They are for the most part nocturnal in their habits, being guided to their prey by their peculiar power of vision, by their scent, and by their hearing, which is superior to that of most other animals. Naturally, they are strictly carnivorous, not hunting down their prey by a protracted chase, like the wolf and dog, but by lying in wait, or by moving stealthily with their supple joints and cushioned feet, till within spring of their victims, on which they dart with a growl, as if the muscular effort of the moment were painful

even to themselves. Whether the attack be that of a tiger on a buffalo, or that of a cat on a helpless mouse, the mode of action is the same—a bound with the whole body from the distance of many yards, a violent stroke with the forefoot, a clutch with the claws, which are thrust from their sheaths, and a half-tearing half-sucking motion of the jaws, as if the animal gloated in ecstasy over the blood of its victim.

This mode of life has gained for these animals the common epithets of “cruel, savage, and bloodthirsty,” and has caused them to be looked upon by the uninformed as monsters in creation. Nothing could be more erroneous. No creature is capable of moral good and moral evil save man; he it is alone that can judge for himself; and he it is upon whom this gift of judgment has imposed the responsibility of right and wrong. The tiger in slaughtering a stag gratifies no evil passion; he merely satisfies an appetite which nature has implanted within him, and which nature has surrounded with the objects for its satisfaction. When these objects shall die out, then also will the tiger cease to exist; and were the whole world equally peopled and cultivated with our own island, the feline family would be limited to a single genus—namely, the humble cat. But as things are at present constituted, the valleys and plains of the tropics are clothed with an excessive vegetation, supporting numerous herbivorous animals, which could only be kept within due limits by the existence of carnivora, such as the lion, tiger, leopard, and panther.

The distribution of the feline animals is governed by those conditions to which we have alluded; and thus the puma inhabits the North American prairie, the jaguar the savannahs of South America, the lion the arid plains of Africa and Asia, the tiger and panther the tropical jungles of the old world; the minor species, as the ocelot and lynx, have a wider range in both worlds; while the domestic cat associates with man in almost every region. With the exception of the latter, none of the other genera have been tamed or domesticated, so that they are strictly “wild beasts,” against which man wages a ceaseless war of extirpation. It is true that in the East one species of leopard is trained for hunting, but this but very sparingly, and even then he does not follow the game by scent, but is carried by the hunters, and only let loose when he is within a few bounds of the animal. It must not be inferred, however, that they are untameable; for every creature is capable more or less of being trained by man, provided it receives due attention; and we have sufficient evidence, in the wonderful feats performed by the lions and tigers of Mr Carter and Van Amburgh, that the *Felinæ* are by no means destitute of intelligent docility. The truth is, there is no inducement to tame them; and thus the cat—the most diminutive of the family, and the only one of direct utility to civilised man—is likely to continue, as it ever has been, the sole domesticated member.

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THE DOMESTICATED CAT.

Respecting the domestication of the cat, of which there are many varieties, differing in size, length of hair, colour, and the like, we have no authentic information. We have no knowledge when it became the associate of man; nor do we know anything concerning its original habitat. It is true that the wild cat has inhabited Great Britain, the continent of Europe, and Asia, from the earliest periods; but that animal presents so many differences, that naturalists generally consider it as belonging to a distinct species. Thus it is a larger and more powerful animal than the domestic one; has longer and shaggier fur; has a more ferocious aspect; has the intestinal canal shorter, which proves it to be more decidedly carnivorous; and has the heart and stomach not quite so like those of the more omnivorous dog. The most of these are transient distinctions, which domestication might obliterate; but we can hardly conceive of the same influence acting so decidedly upon the internal structure. However this may be, the general opinion at present is, that they belong to different species; that the wild cat is strictly an inhabitant of the brake, enduring with admirable fortitude the extremes of heat and cold; and that the domestic animal, from its more delicate constitution, and its fondness of warmth, seems to have sprung from a southern habitat.

Every one is so perfectly familiar with the domestic cat, that any description of the animal is altogether unnecessary; yet one or two of the more obvious varieties may be mentioned, with the remark, that it is quite as difficult, from their present appearance, to refer them all to one stock, as it is to believe that that stock is the wild cat of the British brake. The Cat of Angora, says a recent writer, of whose descriptions we avail ourselves, is a very beautiful variety, with silvery hair of fine silken texture, generally longest on the neck, but also long on the tail. Some are yellowish, and others olive, approaching to the colour of the lion; but they are all delicate creatures, and of gentle dispositions. The Persian Cat is a variety with the hair very much produced, and very silky, perhaps more so than the cat of Angora. It is, however, differently coloured, being of a fine uniform gray on the upper part, with the texture of the fur as soft as silk, and the lustre glossy; the colour fades off on the lower parts of the sides, and passes into white, or nearly so, on the belly. This is probably one of the most beautiful varieties, and it is said to be exceedingly gentle in its manners. The Chinese Cat has the fur beautifully glossed, but it is very different from either of those which have been mentioned. It is variegated with black and yellow, and, unlike the most of the race, has the ears pendulous. The last we shall mention is the Tortoise-shell Cat, one of the prettiest varieties of those which have the fur of moderate length,

and without any particular silvery gloss. The colours are very pure black, white, and reddish orange; and in this country, at least, males thus marked are said to be rare, though they are quite common in Egypt and the south of Europe. This variety has other qualities to recommend it besides the beauty of its colours. Tortoise-shell cats are very elegant, though delicate in their form, and are, at the same time, very active, and among the most attached and grateful of the whole race. It may be remarked, however, that there is much less difference in manners than in appearance, and that those which are best fed and most kindly treated are invariably the best natured and the most attached.

It has already been observed that little or nothing is known regarding the history of the domestic cat; and naturally so, since the animal is generally too insignificant to merit much attention. The cat has been known from time immemorial to the Chinese, Hindoos, and Persians; was domiciled among the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Jews, Greeks, and Romans; and even figures in the mythology of some of these nations. Among the Egyptians the cat was held in the greatest veneration. If one died a natural death, it was mourned for with certain appointed symbols of grief; and if killed, the murderer was given up to the rabble to be buffeted to death. Cats were thus not only held sacred when alive, but after death were embalmed and deposited in the niches of the catacombs. Moncrieff mentions that an insult offered to a cat by a Roman was the cause of an insurrection among the Egyptians, even when the fact of their own vanquishment could not excite them to rebel; and it is also told that Cambyses, availing himself of this regard for the animal, made himself master of Pelusis, which had hitherto successfully resisted his arms. The stratagem which he fell upon was in the highest degree ingenious: he gave to each of his soldiers employed in the attack a live cat instead of a buckler, and the Egyptian garrison, rather than injure the objects of their veneration, suffered themselves to be conquered. M. Baumgarten informs us, that when he was at Damascus, he saw there a kind of hospital for cats: the house in which they were kept was very large, walled round, and was said to be quite full of them. On inquiring into the origin of this singular institution, he was told that Mahomet, when he once lived there, brought with him a cat, which he kept in the sleeve of his garment, and carefully fed with his own hands—cutting off his sleeve rather than disturb the slumber of his favourite. His followers in this place, therefore, ever afterwards paid a superstitious respect to these animals; and supported them in this manner by public alms, which were very adequate to the purpose.

In the early history of our own country also, cats were of so much importance as to be the subject of special enactments. In the reign of Howel the Good, Prince of Wales, who died in

948, laws were made to fix the prices of different animals, among which the cat was included, as being at that early period of great importance, on account of its scarcity and utility. The price of a kitten before it could see was fixed at one penny; till proof could be given of its having caught a mouse, twopence; after which it was rated at fourpence—a great sum in those days, when the value of specie was extremely high. It was likewise required that the animal should be perfect in its senses of hearing and seeing; should be a good mouser, have its claws whole, and, if a female, be a careful nurse. If it failed in any of these qualifications, the seller was to forfeit to the buyer a third of the purchase-money. If any one should steal or kill the cat that guarded the prince's granary, the offender was to forfeit either a milch ewe, with her fleece and lamb, or as much wheat as, when poured on the cat suspended by its tail (its head touching the floor), would form a heap high enough to cover the tip of the tail. This is curious not only as a matter of history, but as showing that, while the wild cat of the country was so abundant as to be troublesome, the domestic species was apparently an import of great rarity, and of considerable value.

INSTANCES OF ATTACHMENT.

It is a vulgar and erroneous belief that cats are only attached to places: there are hundreds of instances on record where they have shown the most devoted and enduring attachment to persons who have treated them with kindness. A gentleman in the neighbourhood of London had a tortoise-shell cat, which, though he never fed it, or paid much attention to it, formed an attachment for him equal to that of a dog. It knew his ring at the bell, and at whatever time he came home, it was rubbing against his legs long before the servant came, saw him into the sitting-room, and then walked off. It was a very active animal, and usually went bird-catching during the night; but when its master rose, which was generally early in the morning, the cat was always ready to receive him at the door of his room, and accompanied him in his morning walk in the garden, alternately skipping to the tops of the trees, and descending and gambolling about him. When he was in his study, it used to pay him several visits in the day, always short ones; but it never retired till he had recognised it. If rubbing against his legs had not the desired effect, it would mount the writing-table, nudge his shoulder, and if that would not do, pat him on the cheek; but the moment he had shaken it by the paw, and given it a pat or two on the head, it walked off. When he was indisposed, it paid him several visits every day, but never continued in the room; and although it was fond of society generally, and also of its food, it never obtruded its company during meals. Its attachment was thus quite disinterested, and no pains whatever had been taken to train it.

When M. Sonnini was in Egypt, he had an Angora cat, which remained in his possession for a long time. This animal was one of the most beautiful of its kind, and equally attractive in its manners and dispositions. In Sonnini's solitary moments, she chiefly kept by his side; she interrupted him frequently in the midst of his labours or meditations, by little affecting caresses, and generally followed him in his walks. During his absence, she sought and called for him incessantly, with the utmost inquietude; and if it were long before he re-appeared, she would quit his apartment, and attach herself to the person of the house where he lived; for whom, next to himself, she entertained the greatest affection. She recognised his voice at a distance, and seemed on each fresh meeting with him to feel increased satisfaction. Her gait was frank, and her look as gentle as her character. She possessed, in a word, the disposition of the most amiable dog beneath the brilliant fur of a cat. "This animal," says M. Sonnini, "was my principal amusement for several years. How was the expression of her attachment depicted upon her countenance! How many times have her tender caresses made me forget my troubles, and consoled me in my misfortunes! My beautiful and interesting companion at length perished. After several days of suffering, during which I never forsook her, her eyes, constantly fixed on me, were at length extinguished; and her loss rent my heart with sorrow."

Mahomet's cat must have ingratiated herself with her master in no common degree, for the prophet preferred cutting off the sleeve of his garment to disturbing the repose of his favourite, who had fallen asleep on it. It is said that Rousseau esteemed the cat more than the dog; but though few will be inclined to go this length, the former is undoubtedly capable of close personal attachment, and knows how to recommend herself to those for whom she feels an affection. Petrarch was so fond of his cat, that he had it embalmed after death, and placed in a niche of his apartment. Dr Johnson, too, had his feline favourite, of which it is told that it once fell ill, and refused every kind of food that could be thought of, till at last an oyster was offered by accident, which it greedily seized, and seemed to relish. The doctor, thinking that his servants would not be over-attentive to the duties of cat-nurse, undertook the charge himself, went daily for a few oysters, brought them home in his pocket, and administered them to poor Puss till she had quite recovered. The celebrated painter, Godefroi Mind, devoted himself almost exclusively to the painting of cats, in which he gained such celebrity, that he was distinguished by the appellation of the "Raphael of cats." He did not view them merely as subjects for art, but his attachment to the animal was unbounded. At one time hydrophobia prevailed to such an extent among the cats of Berne, that 800 were destroyed in consequence of an order issued by the magistrates. Poor Mind was in the deepest grief

for the death of the cats, nor was he ever after completely consoled. He had, however, so successfully secreted his own favourite cat, that she was spared. Minette was always near him when he was at work, and he carried on a kind of conversation with her by gestures and words. Sometimes Minette occupied his lap, while two or three kittens were perched on his shoulder, or on the back of his neck, as he stooped at his occupation; and thus he would remain for hours together without stirring, for fear of disturbing his companions, whose purring soothed and composed him. What made this the more remarkable was, that Mind was not particularly well-tempered, and that he could never be disturbed by visitors. His cat was no doubt equally attached to her master.

It is very common for cats to select one member of a family on whom they lavish all their fondness, while to the others they comport themselves with the utmost indifference. "I remember," says a female correspondent, "there was a cat with her kittens found in a hole in the wall, in the garden of the house where my father-in-law lived. One of the kittens, being a very beautiful black one, was brought into the house, and almost immediately attached himself in a very extraordinary way to me. I was in mourning at the time, and perhaps the similarity of the hue of my dress to his sable fur might first have attracted him; but however this may have been, whenever he came into the room he constantly jumped into my lap, and evinced his fondness by purring and rubbing his head against me in a very coaxing manner. He continued thus to distinguish me during the rest of his life, and though I went with my father-in-law's family every winter to Dublin, and every summer to the country, the change of abode (to which cats are supposed so averse) never troubled my favourite, provided he could be with me. Frequently, when we have been walking home after spending the evening out, he has come running down half the street to meet us, testifying the greatest delight. On one occasion, when I had an illness which confined me for upwards of two months to my room, poor Lee Boo deserted the parlour altogether, though he had been always patted and caressed by every one there. He would sit for hours mewling disconsolately at my door, and when he could, he would steal in, jump upon the bed, testifying his joy at seeing me by loud purring and coaxing, and sometimes licking my hand. The very day I went down, he resumed his regular attendance in the parlour."

One of the most affecting instances of personal attachment in the cat, is that mentioned by M. Ladoucette. Madame Helvitiuſ had a favourite, which constantly lay at her feet, seemingly always ready to defend her. It never molested the birds which its mistress kept; it would not take food from any hand save hers; and would not allow any one else to caress it. At the death of his mistress, the poor cat was removed from her cham-

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ber, but it made its way there the next morning, went on the bed, sat upon her chair, slowly and mournfully paced over her toilet, and cried most piteously, as if lamenting his poor mistress. After her funeral, it was found stretched on her grave, apparently having died from excess of grief. Another equally remarkable instance is related by Mr Pennant in his Account of London. Henry Wriothsly, Earl of Southampton, the friend and companion of the Earl of Essex in his fatal insurrection, having been some time confined in the Tower, was one day surprised by a visit from his favourite cat, which is said to have reached its master by descending the chimney of his apartment.

The following anecdote of combined attachment and sagacity rivals anything that has been told of the dog, and places the cat in a much more favourable light than current opinion would allow:—In the summer of 1800, a physician of Lyons was requested to inquire into a murder that had been committed on a woman of that city. He accordingly went to the residence of the deceased, where he found her extended lifeless on the floor, and weltering in her blood. A large white cat was mounted on the cornice of a cupboard, at the farther end of the apartment, where he seemed to have taken refuge. He sat motionless, with his eyes fixed on the corpse, and his attitude and looks expressing horror and affright. The following morning he was found in the same station and attitude; and when the room was filled with officers of justice, neither the clattering of the soldiers' arms, nor the loud conversation of the company, could in the least degree divert his attention. As soon, however, as the suspected persons were brought in, his eyes glared with increased fury; his hair bristled; he darted into the middle of the apartment, where he stopped for a moment to gaze at them, and then precipitately retreated. The countenances of the assassins were disconcerted; and they now, for the first time during the whole course of the horrid business, felt their atrocious audacity forsake them.

AFFECTION FOR OTHER ANIMALS.

Every one who has observed the deportment of the female cat towards her young, must have admired not only her maternal assiduity, but the playful simplicity she assumes to amuse them. The same tenderness she has been known to bestow on the young of other creatures; nursing them and tending them with the most devoted watchfulness. Books on animal biography abound with instances of this nature. Mr White of Selborne mentions that a friend of his had a leveret brought to him, which his servants fed with milk from a spoon. About the same time his cat kittened, and the young ones were drowned. The little hare was lost, and it was supposed to have been devoured by some dog or cat. However, in about a fortnight after, as the gentleman was sitting in his garden in the dusk of the evening,

he observed his cat with tail erect trotting towards him, and calling with short notes of complacency, such as cats use towards their kittens, and something gambolling after, which proved to be the leveret, which the cat had supported with her milk. The same writer relates a similar anecdote of a boy who had taken three young squirrels from their nest. These creatures he put under a cat which had lately lost her kittens, and found that she nursed and suckled them with the same assiduity and affection as if they had been her own progeny. So many persons went to see the little squirrels suckled by a cat, that the foster-mother became jealous of her charge, and in pain for their safety, and therefore concealed them over the ceiling, where one of them perished.

A similar story is told, in Dodsley's Annual Register, of a cat that suckled a couple of young rabbits, which had been thrown to her to devour; and, what is equally wonderful, we have heard of a cat that brought out two chickens, and treated them with the same affection as she did her kittens. A more remarkable instance, however, occurred some years ago in the house of a Mr Greenfield of Maryland. A cat had kittens, to which she frequently carried mice and other small animals for food, and among the rest she is supposed to have carried a young rat. The kittens, probably not being hungry, played with it; and when the cat gave suck to them, the rat likewise sucked her. This having been observed by some of the servants, Mr Greenfield had the kittens and rat brought down stairs, and put on the floor; and in carrying them off, the cat was remarked to convey away the young rat as tenderly as she did any of the kittens. This experiment was repeated as often as any company came to the house, till great numbers had become eye-witnesses of the preternatural affection.

We shall close our instances of the cat's affection towards the young of other animals by the following anecdote from the pages of Marryatt, allowing the captain to tell it in his own amusing way:—"A little black spaniel had five puppies, which were considered too many for her to bring up. As, however, the breed was much in request, her mistress was unwilling that any of them should be destroyed, and she asked the cook whether she thought it would be possible to bring a portion of them up by hand before the kitchen fire. In reply, the cook observed that the cat had that day kitted, and that, perhaps, the puppies might be substituted. The cat made no objection, took to them kindly, and gradually all the kittens were taken away, and the cat nursed the two puppies only. Now, the first curious fact was, that the two puppies nursed by the cat were, in a fortnight, as active, forward, and playful as kittens would have been: they had the use of their legs, barked, and gambolled about; while the other three, nursed by the mother, were whining and rolling about like fat slugs. The cat gave them her tail to play with,

and they were always in motion: they soon ate meat, and long before the others they were fit to be removed. This was done, and the cat became very inconsolable. She prowled about the house, and on the second day of tribulation fell in with the little spaniel who was nursing the three other puppies. 'Oh,' says Puss, putting up her back, 'it is you who have stolen my children.' 'No,' replied the spaniel with a snarl; 'they are my own flesh and blood.' 'That won't do,' said the cat; 'I'll take my oath before any justice of the peace that you have my two puppies.' Thereupon issue was joined; that is to say, there was a desperate combat, which ended in the defeat of the spaniel, and in the cat walking off proudly with one of the puppies, which she took to her own bed. Having deposited this one, she returned, fought again, gained another victory, and redeemed another puppy. Now, it is very singular that she should have only taken two, the exact number she had been deprived of."

Besides these instances where the maternal feeling is the exciting motive, there are many accounts of cats having lived in amity with creatures to whom they are supposed to be naturally averse. A few years since, a collection of wild beasts, birds, &c. was exhibited, in which the most attractive object was a cage inhabited by a cat, a guinea-pig, some white mice, and some birds—all living together in peace and harmony—Puss not only having laid aside her predatory propensities, but actually regarding her companions with looks of complacency and kindness. "We have at present," says a correspondent, "a cat who has formed a very warm friendship with a large Newfoundland dog. She is continually caressing him, advances in all haste to him when he comes in, with her tail erect, then rubs her head against him, and purrs delightedly. When he lies before the kitchen fire, she uses him as a bed, pulling up and settling his hair with her claws to make it comfortable. As soon as she has arranged it to her liking, she lies down and composes herself to sleep, generally purring till she is no longer awake; and they often lie thus for an hour at a time. Poor Wallace bears this rough combing of his locks with the most patient placidity, turning his head towards her during the operation, and merely giving her a benevolent look, or gently licking her."

We have also met with the following, which shows how the cat will look for assistance in cases of emergency, and that she will hit upon some way of showing her gratitude for the kindness conferred. We give it in the words of the individual who recounts it:—"I was on a visit to a friend last summer, who had a favourite cat and dog, which lived together on the best possible terms, eating from the same plate, and sleeping on the same rug. Puss had a young family while I was at the Park, and Pincher paid a daily visit to the kittens, whose nursery was at the top of the house. One morning there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning; Pincher was in the drawing-room, and

the cat was attending her family in the garret. Pincher seemed to be considerably annoyed by the vivid flashes of lightning which continually startled him; and just as he had crept close to my feet, some one entered the drawing-room followed by Puss, who walked in with a disturbed air, and mewing with all her might. She came up to Pincher, rubbed her face against his cheek, touched him gently with her paw, and then walked to the door; stopped, looked back, mewed—all of which said, as plainly as words could have done, ‘Come with me, Pincher;’ but Pincher was too much frightened himself to give any consolation to her, and took no notice of the invitation. The cat then returned and renewed her application with increased energy; but the dog was immovable; though it was evident that he understood her meaning, for he turned away his head with a half-conscious look, and crept still closer to me; and Puss finding all her intreaties unavailing, then left the room. Soon after this, her mewing became so piteous that I could no longer resist going to see what was the matter. I met the cat at the top of the stairs, close to the door of my sleeping apartment. She ran to me, rubbed herself against me, and then went into the room, and crept under the wardrobe. I then heard two voices, and discovered that she had brought down one of her kittens and lodged it there for safety; but her fears and cares being so divided between the kittens above and this little one below, I suppose she had wanted Pincher to watch by this one while she went for the others; for, having confided it to my protection, she hastened up stairs. I followed her with my young charge, placed it beside her, and moved their little bed farther from the window, through which the lightning had flashed so vividly as to alarm poor Puss for the safety of her family. I remained there till the storm had subsided, and all was again calm. On the following morning, much to my surprise, I found her waiting for me at the door of my apartment. She accompanied me down to breakfast, sat by me, and caressed me in every possible way. She had always been in the habit of going down to breakfast with the lady of the house; but on this morning she had resisted all her coaxing to leave my door, and would not move a step till I made my appearance. She went to the breakfast-room with me, and remained, as I have mentioned, until breakfast was over, and then went up stairs to her family. She had never done this before, and never did it again: she had shown her gratitude for my care of her little ones, and her duty was done.”

COURAGE AND BOLDNESS.

The cat, being naturally carnivorous, may be expected to possess considerable audacity. Every one must have witnessed the boldness with which a cat of ordinary size will stand up against even the largest Newfoundland dog, bristling her hair, and using her claws with the greatest address, so long as she can keep her

front to her antagonist. Indeed it is only when the dog can lay hold of the comparatively slender spine of his opponent, that he overcomes her—few dogs having the boldness long to resist the ferocity with which she assails their faces and eyes with her claws. The following instance of maternal courage and affection, recorded in the Naturalists' Cabinet, is worthy of admiration:—“A cat who had a numerous brood of kittens, one sunny day in spring, encouraged her little ones to frolic in the vernal beams of noon about the stable-door. While she was joining them in a thousand sportive tricks and gambols, they were discovered by a large hawk, who was sailing above the barnyard in expectation of prey. In a moment, swift as lightning, the hawk darted upon one of the kittens, and had as quickly borne it off, but for the courageous mother, who, seeing the danger of her offspring, flew on the common enemy, who, to defend itself, let fall the prize. The battle presently became seemingly dreadful to both parties; for the hawk, by the power of his wings, the sharpness of his talons, and the keenness of his beak, had for a while the advantage, cruelly lacerating the poor cat, and had actually deprived her of one eye in the conflict; but Puss, no way daunted by this accident, strove with all her cunning and agility for her little ones, till she had broken the wing of her adversary. In this state she got him more within the power of her claws, the hawk still defending himself apparently with additional vigour; and the fight continued with equal fury on the side of grimalkin, to the great entertainment of many spectators. At length victory seemed to favour the nearly exhausted mother, and she availed herself of the advantage; for, by an instantaneous exertion, she laid the hawk motionless beneath her feet, and, as if exulting in the victory, tore off the head of the vanquished tyrant. Disregarding the loss of her eye, she immediately ran to the bleeding kitten, licked the wounds inflicted by the hawk's talons on its tender sides, purring while she caressed her liberated offspring, with the same maternal affection as if no danger had assailed them or their affectionate parent.”

The cat's dislike to wet her feet has long been proverbial. The saying, “she likes fish, but won't wet her feet for them,” is, however, not strictly true: the cat has been known to take the water after a fish, just as she will take the brake after a young hare or pheasant. Her dislike to soil her feet arises as much from her natural love of cleanliness, and the desire to keep her fur dry, as from any fear that she has to take the water. A friend of Dr Darwin's saw a cat catch a trout, by darting upon it in a deep clear water, at the mill at Weaford, near Litchfield. The animal belonged to a Mrs Stanley, who had frequently seen her catch fish in the same manner in the summer, when the mill-pool was drawn so low that the fish could be seen. Other cats have been known to take fish in shallow water as they stood on the bank. This may probably be a natural act of taking prey,

which acquired delicacy by domestication has in general prevented cats from using, though their desire of eating fish continues in its original strength.

INSTANCES OF MEMORY.

The attachment of the cat to particular persons and places, and the fact of its often returning to its original home after a long absence, and over a great distance, prove the possession of a pretty accurate memory. All the felinae seem well endowed in this respect, and none more so, perhaps, than the domestic cat. The following surprising instance we transcribe from the Scotsman newspaper for 1819:—"A favourite tabby belonging to a shipmaster was left on shore by accident, while his vessel sailed from the harbour of Aberdour, Fifeshire, which is about half a mile from the village. The vessel was about a month absent, and on her return, to the astonishment of the shipmaster, Puss came on board with a fine stout kitten in her mouth, apparently about three weeks old, and went directly down into the cabin. Two others of her young ones were afterwards caught quite wild in a neighbouring wood, where she must have remained with them till the return of the vessel. The shipmaster did not allow her again to go on shore, otherwise it is probable she would have brought the whole litter on board. What makes this the more remarkable is, that vessels were daily entering and leaving the harbour, none of which she ever thought of visiting till the one she had left returned." How wonderfully accurate must this animal's recollection of the ship have been! The differences, however trifling, between it and other vessels which put in, must have been all closely observed and remembered; or we must suppose the creature to have had its recollections awakened by the voice or figure of some of its shipmates passing near to the wood where its family was located.

We have all heard of cats returning to the homes from which they have been sent, and this we might readily conceive to be the result of accurate observation and retentive memory; but there are many instances, well authenticated, where they could hardly have been aided by their faculties, and where they appear to have been guided by some mysterious instinct. "We have a cat," says our lady correspondent already quoted, "who was a very wild character, often committing depredations in the larder, destroying our young pigeons, and making great havoc among the birds. He was considered so lawless, that, after a consultation on what was best to be done, a decree of banishment was issued against him, and he was sent in a thick linen bag to a cottage at about two miles' distance, where he was offered shelter, as he was an expert mouser. We thought we should never see Mr Tib again, but found ourselves quite mistaken; for late one evening, about three weeks after, he walked into the kitchen, and greeted every one so kindly, that he met with a more favour-

able reception than his previous conduct could have warranted him in expecting. Whether he has repented of his late misconduct, whether he is conscious that it was the cause of his banishment, or whether he has passed through scenes which have broken his daring spirit, we cannot say, but all his bad habits are actually conquered, and he is now quite a pattern of domestic propriety." Still more extraordinary is the instance related by a gentleman who removed his establishment from the county of Sligo to near Dublin, a distance of not less than ninety miles. When about to change his residence, he and his children regretted very much being obliged to leave a favourite cat behind them, which had endeared itself to them by its docility and affection. This gentleman had not been many days settled in his new abode, when one evening, as the family were sitting chatting after tea, the servant came in, followed by a cat so precisely like the one left behind, that all the family repeated his name at once. The creature testified great joy in his own way at the meeting. He was closely examined, and no difference whatever was discernible between the cat in Sligo and that now beside them. Still, it was difficult to believe it was their poor pet; for how could he have travelled after them, or how could he have found them out? And yet the exact resemblance, and the satisfaction which the poor animal evinced as he walked about, seemingly in all the confidence of being among his friends, with his tail erect, and purring with pleasure, left but little doubt upon their minds that this was indeed their own cat. The gentleman took him upon his lap, and examining him closely, found that his claws were actually worn down, which at once convinced him that poor Puss had really travelled the whole ninety miles' journey.

SAGACITY AND INTELLIGENCE.

While we readily admit that the cat is inferior in docility and intelligence to the dog, we are not of those who would exalt the one at the expense of the other, and continue to harbour absurd prejudices against the dispositions and manners of the former. We have seen that it is by no means destitute of attachment, gentleness, courage, memory, and other mental attributes; and if we regard it honestly, we shall also find that it exhibits in many instances no small degree of sagacious ingenuity. "No experiment," says an intelligent writer, "can be more beautiful than that of setting a kitten for the first time before a looking-glass. The animal appears surprised and pleased with the resemblance, and makes several attempts at touching its new acquaintance; and at length finding its efforts fruitless, it looks behind the glass, and appears highly astonished at the absence of the figure. It again views itself, and tries to touch the image with its foot, suddenly looking at intervals behind the glass. It then becomes more accurate in its observations, and begins, as it

were, to make experiments, by stretching out its paw in different directions; and when it finds that these motions are answered in every respect by the figure in the glass, it seems at length to be convinced of the real nature of the image." If so acute and intelligent in its very infancy, what may we expect when its faculties are matured by observation and experiment?

"A friend of mine," says the Rev. Mr Bingley, "possessed a cat and a dog, which, not being able to live together in peace, had several contentious struggles for the mastery; and in the end the dog so completely prevailed, that the cat was driven away, and forced to seek for shelter elsewhere. Several months elapsed, during which the dog alone possessed the house. At length, however, he was poisoned by a female servant, whose nocturnal visitors he had too often betrayed, and was soon afterwards carried out lifeless into the court before the door. The cat, from a neighbouring roof, was observed to watch the motions of several persons who went up to look at him; and when all were retired, he descended and crept with some degree of caution into the place. He soon ventured to approach; and after having frequently patted the dog with his paw, appeared perfectly sensible that his late quarrelsome companion could no more insult him; and from that time he quietly returned to his former residence and habits." Here there was only a reasoning process exhibited; but in the following instance, related by Dr Smellie, there was ingenuity of performance combined with the sagacity:—"A cat frequented a closet, the door of which was fastened by a common iron latch. A window was situated near the door. When the door was shut, the cat gave herself no uneasiness; for, so soon as she was tired of her confinement, she mounted on the sill of the window, and with her paws dexterously lifted the latch and came out. This practice she continued for years."

Still more ingenious are several of the instances related by M. Antoine in his *Animaux Célèbres*:—In a cloister in France, where the hours of meals were announced by the ringing of a bell, a cat was always in attendance as soon as it was heard, that she, too, according to custom, might be fed. One day it happened that Puss was shut up in a room by herself when the bell rang, so she was not able to avail herself of the summons. Some hours after she was let out, and instantly ran to the spot where dinner was always left for her, but no dinner was to be found. In the afternoon the bell was heard ringing at an unusual hour; when the inmates of the cloister came to see what was the cause of it, they found the cat clinging to the bell-rope, and setting it in motion as well as she was able, in order that she might have her dinner served up to her. In this instance the cat must have been in the habit of observing what went forward, and was therefore led to associate the ringing of the bell with the serving up of dinner; and feeling the want of her meal, very naturally applied herself to perform the act which had always preceded its

appearance. Another anecdote evincing still greater ingenuity and cunning, is related by the same amusing compiler. An Angora cat belonging to the Charter-house of Paris, having observed that the cook always left the kitchen upon the ringing of a certain bell, and thus left the coast clear for his depredations, soon acquired the art of pulling the bell, and during the cook's absence regularly made off with some of the delicacies which were left unprotected. This trick he repeated at intervals for several weeks, till one day he was detected by a person who was placed in wait for the purloiner.

The power of observation in the lower animals is much more active and accurate than is generally supposed; and to those who have watched their conduct, they seem not only to observe persons and events, but actually to know days, and if not to understand our language, at least to comprehend the meaning of the tones in which it is uttered. A very curious proof of the observant faculty in the cat is given in the following story:—There was a lady who lived at Potsdam with her children, one of whom ran a splinter into her little foot, which caused her to scream out most violently. At first her cries were disregarded, and supposed to proceed from crossness; but at length the eldest sister, who had been asleep, was awakened by the screams, and as she was just getting up to quiet the child, she observed a favourite cat, with whom they were wont to play, and who was of a remarkably gentle disposition, leave its seat under the stove, go to the crying girl, and give her such a smart blow on the cheek with one of its paws, as to draw blood. After this the animal walked back with the greatest composure and gravity to its place, as if satisfied with having chastised the child for crying, and with the hope of indulging in a comfortable nap. No doubt it had often seen the child punished for crossness, and as there was no one near to administer correction, Puss had determined to take the law into her own hand.

It is told that before the conquest of Cyprus by the Turks, a garrison of disciplined cats was kept on that island for the purpose of destroying the serpents wherewith it was infested. So well trained were these feline hunters, that they came in to their meals at the sound of a bell, and upon a similar signal returned in order to the chase, which they prosecuted with the most admirable zeal and address.

Such are the accounts which we have been enabled to glean, from a pretty wide range of authorities, respecting the disposition and manners of the domestic cat. Exaggerated to some extent they may be, but not greatly so; for from all that we have observed of the animal—and our experience has been neither short nor partial—we are inclined to regard it as an attached, gentle, and playful associate, and all the more so that it meets with kindly treatment.