



A CHRISTMAS CARD FROM LIFE.

By permission of Hon. and Rev. F. Dutton.

TO many people there is no greater ordeal than that of sitting for a portrait—yet very few ever take into consideration the fact that it may be even more of a trial to the artist. Anxious, as he may well be, to do the utmost justice both to his subject and to his art, what can the artist find more dispiriting than a sitter who speedily becomes restive or easily bored?—and, alas! the majority of people fall easily under one of these two headings.

DOGS AND CATS AS SITTERS.

BY NELLIE HADDEN.

My own experience goes to prove that animals on the whole are far more satisfactory sitters than human beings. For instance, what elderly gentleman could you keep not merely awake, but also exhibiting a lively intelligence, by so simple a device as a live hedgehog rustling beside him in a paper bag? True, it might make him sit up at first, but the novelty would soon wear off. Whereas I found this device most successful in the case of a phlegmatic little terrier, "Bobbie," who was once posed in my studio. He was a keen sportsman, with a marked predilection for hedgehogs; hence it



I.—"BOBBIE": A SPORTING CHARACTER.

By permission of Lady Isabella Keane.



II.—THE ONLY CAT FOUND IN CHITRAL.

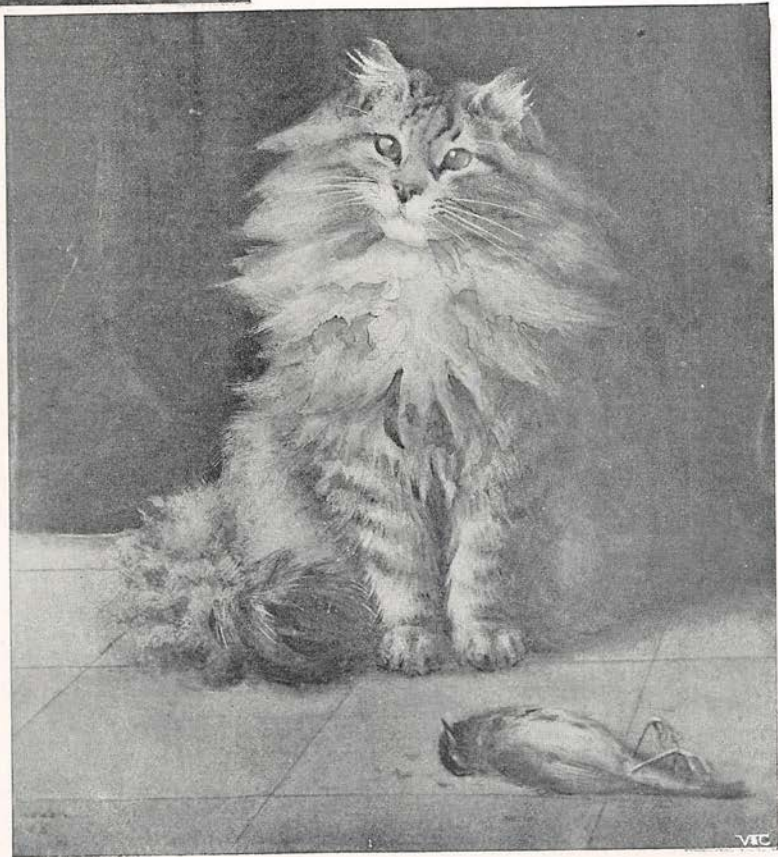
By permission of Sir William Gatacre.

was an easy matter to keep him on the *qui vive* throughout the whole length of each sitting, without actually gratifying his curiosity; moreover, the animal in the paper bag unconsciously played its part with praiseworthy perseverance, leaving me free to devote myself to the work in hand.

Though I have had many odd experiences with animal sitters in general, I have only space now to refer to the dogs and cats of my acquaintance. Perhaps one of the most interesting of these was a curious little cat, with a mole-like skin, that

was brought by Sir William Gatacre from Chitral in 1895. She was the only cat discovered in that place. I found her a most difficult subject to deal with, as she had none of the reserve and dignity of the home-made article. She was all life and activity, and would run up the curtains with a zest that was distinctly distracting—from the artist's point of view. At other times she would give vent to the most pitiful little cries, more like those of an infant than of an animal. She soon succumbed to our climate, dying in little over a year, despite the utmost care bestowed on her by her devoted mistress.

For studio purposes cats are much more difficult to manage than dogs. They have an exasperating habit of curling themselves up in a comfortable position, when the mood seizes them, and turning their backs on the portrait painter with a most perfectly studied show of indifference; or they will look contemptuously at any dainty that may be placed



III.—"BOGIE," OR "WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?"

By permission of Miss H. G. Williams.



IV.—“CORINNE.”

By permission of Mrs. Lockwood.

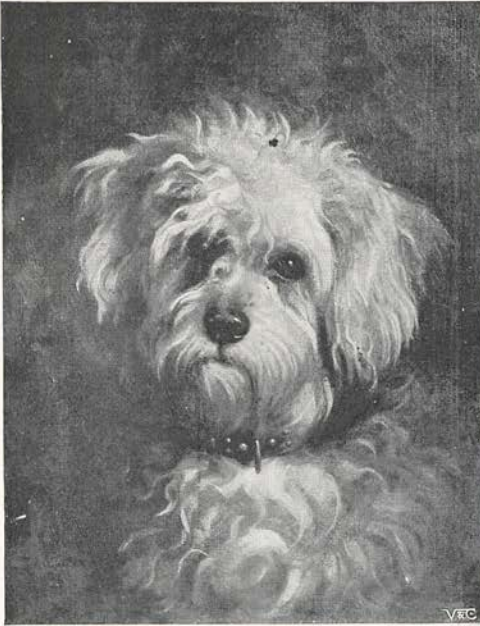
before them, and walk off nonchalantly, as though their habitual attitude were a bland disregard of food. I tried an experiment with our own cat, “Bogie,” which proved most successful. He was a splendid specimen of a silver-grey chinchilla (stolen, alas! and never since recovered). The first time he sat to me I put him on a table and attached him, by means of a collar and a string, to a bar running across the studio ceiling. After a while he got bored and jumped down, only to find himself swinging in mid-air. Of course, I rushed to the rescue; but “Bogie”

took the lesson promptly to heart, and never again attempted to jump down after he had been posed. I doubt whether a dog would have taken in the situation quite as quickly.

As a general thing I have found it much easier to manage animals in the absence of their owners. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. “Corinne,” the handsome poodle whose portrait I painted in miniature on ivory, turned her back on me the moment we were left alone, and howled dismally without stopping. Could anything be more

disconcerting? In the end her master or mistress had to assist at every sitting.

A model sitter was the dog I have designated "Jock No. I." He was well known in many parts of London, sedately trotting after his master in Piccadilly, or giving a *ton* to St. James's Street. He had a paw in all his master's pies—this busy



V.—"JOCK NO. II."

By permission of Miss Lucy Hadden.

"Jock." Until that master married, he saw him to his work every morning. He accompanied him on his wedding tour (after being shown the marriage lines), and on their return felt it his duty to remain at home and guard the house which contained his mistress. After his portrait was finished, he would sit up and "pose" every time he met me, for sitting meant biscuit.

"Jock No. II."



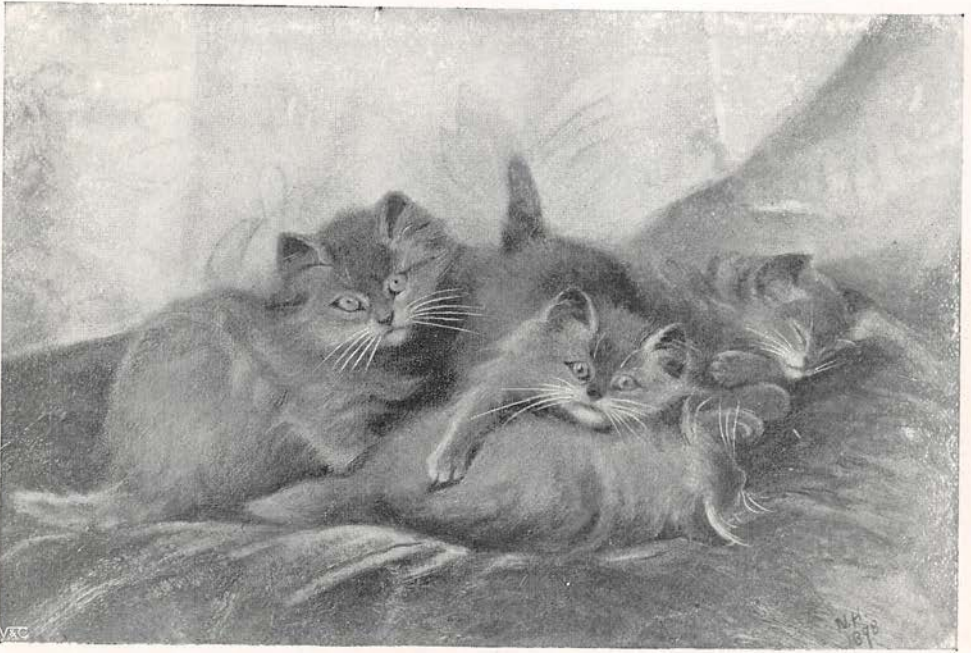
VI.—"JOCK NO. I."

By permission of William Sayer, Esq.

had a pathetic little face, but he was not so interesting as my own old friend and model, "Jock No. III." The latter began to sit at the early age of six weeks, and how he hated

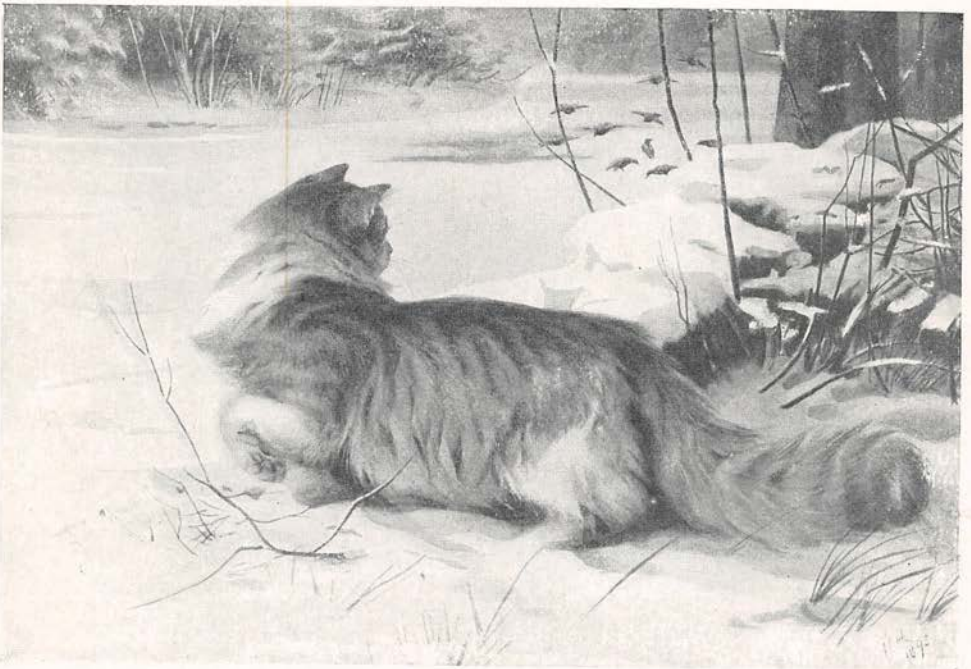


VII.—"JOCK NO. III.": "THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS."



VIII.—BLUE PERSIAN KITTENS, "PROMISING BUDS."

By permission of John M. Wood, Esq.



IX.—"GAMBOGE, THE BIRD-FANCIER."

By permission of Miss H. G. Williams.



X.—“VENUS.”

By permission of John Devereil, Esq.

it at first! Later he became so accomplished in the art, and was so jealous of other sitters, that I had to shut him up when they arrived. He loved his food, as most dogs do, and a greedy dog is the easiest to keep quiet and alert; but he would also sit and “look on” (as in the illustration on page 300) while his friends lapped, in spite of the remarks published with a reproduction of this picture in one of the papers to the effect that no dog could be made to look on while a cat fed. Good little “Jock”! He is gone to the “happy hunting grounds!”

Perhaps one of the most difficult subjects I ever had to paint was the handful of Blue Persian kittens shown in illustration VIII. “Promising Buds” they were called; but to the artist they were anything but promising, for the little electric atoms were all over the place.

“Gamboge” is a large yellow gentleman, like a tawny tiger. Most cats object to walking in snow, and when compelled to do so from the force of necessity they shake each paw as they lift it, with an air of marked disgust at finding themselves in such circumstances. But “Gamboge” is an exception, and looks particularly handsome against the white background when prowling stealthily after the birds.

“Venus” was one of three beautiful bulldogs. Whether seated in a row in their respective baskets or rushing out barking at the chance caller, this trio invariably struck terror to the heart of the timid stranger. In reality “Venus” was the most good-natured and confiding of dogs, and became so much attached to me that when I left the house she wanted to come with me. “Victor” was a perfect



XI.—“VICTOR.”

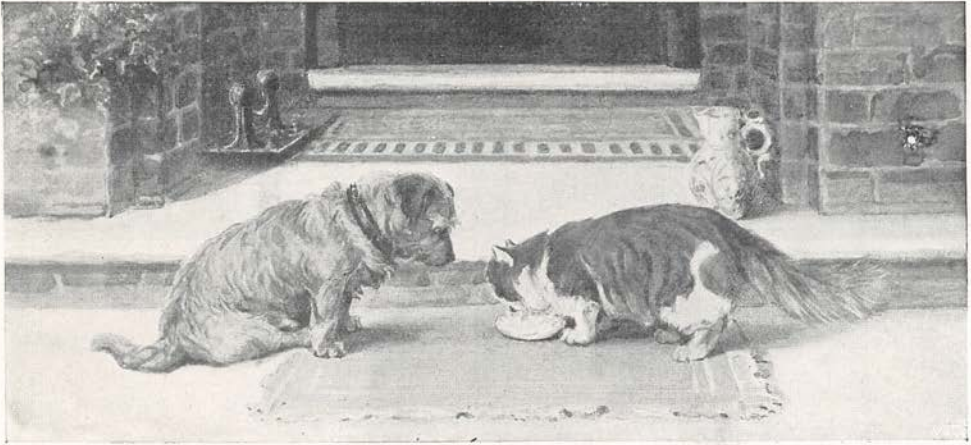
By permission of Col. J. C. Dalton, R.A.



XII.—“THE WITCH OF BRIGHTON.”
By permission of H. Senior, Esq.



XIII.—“ROMETTA.”
By permission of Lady Willes.



XIV.—“THE ONE WHO LOOKED ON.”

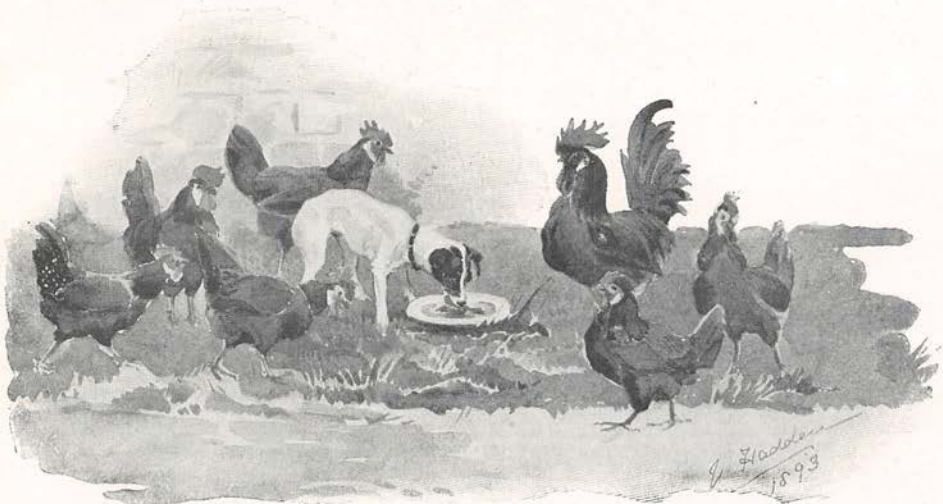
By permission of Mrs. Whitfield.

gentleman. He usually sat “with his arms crossed,” as an old servant described him. He and I lunched together during the sittings at an A. B. C. shop in London, and his manners, as he gravely mounted a chair opposite me and partook of sponge cake, might be copied with advantage by some humans.

The “Witch of Brighton” was well known there, and quite a professional beauty. It is a great pleasure to paint a beauty who is not self-conscious, and this lady gave herself no airs, though she was most openly flattered and praised to her very face.

Another very dainty sitter was “Rometta,”

a native of Rome. She would pose with all the ease of an Italian model. Perhaps no greater contrast could be presented than this graceful little foreigner and the bulldog “Venus.” It seems strange that both should come under the heading “dog”; yet each in its way was equally interesting. And it is amazing what character and individuality will reveal itself in animals as one cultivates their personal acquaintance and devotes all one’s attention to their idiosyncrasies during a number of sittings. With their lack of affectation, and their general intelligence, it would be difficult to find more entertaining sitters than cats and dogs.



“THE BLACK WATCH.”

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