

PUSSY MIEOW



S. LOUISE
PATTERSON

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MY NAME IS MEOW

PUSSY MEOW:

The Autobiography of a Cat

BY
S. LOUISE PATTESON

With an Introduction by
SARAH K. BOLTON



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To "Guy"

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Preface

IN the fall of 1895, while the National Convention of the S. P. C. A. was in session in Cleveland, a group of people stood in the assembly room one day discussing "Black Beauty" and "Beautiful Joe." One expressed the hope that as the horse and the dog had now secured a public hearing, some one would be willing to undertake the same for the cat. That same evening "Pussy Meow" began writing her story. Its only object is to breathe out the joys, the sorrows and the longings of a misunderstood and much maligned fellow-creature, and to secure for her the consideration which humanity owes to the dumb.

Cleveland, O., 1901.

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Introduction

I HAVE read with great interest this true story of "Pussy Meow," written by one, who, in the midst of a very busy life, finds time to be a devoted friend to the speechless, and to study their nature and habits. The life of the author has been full of noble deeds for animals, and I am glad of an opportunity to say how much I wish all women would do likewise.

The book abounds in practical suggestions about the care, the food, the comfort, and the needs of the animal world, blended so pleasantly with the story that both young people and adults will find it charming and helpful. The picture of the happy home of mother and child, where cats sleep in the sun, or kittens frolic and make merry with their human friends, will linger in one's mind long after the book is closed. Now one's heart is touched by the pathetic death of a homeless creature, and

again one laughs at the winsome and intelligent acts of our dumb companions.

After reading the book, some will remember to make their pets happy on Christmas day, rather than spend all for personal enjoyment. Some, it is hoped, when going into the country for the summer, or for a vacation, will take their cats with them, as did the writer of "Pussy Meow," and not let them starve alone at home; or, on returning to the city, leave them on ocean beaches, or deserted mountain-tops, to die of hunger and cold.

Cats have had a varied history. In Egypt, in early times, they were loved and worshiped. At death they were embalmed, and given a costly funeral. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great, when he conquered Egypt, placed a number of cats and dogs at the head of his army, and the Egyptians unwilling to kill the creatures they loved, would not defend themselves, and became an easy prey. The present Shah of Persia, it is said, has fifty petted cats, each cared for by an attendant, and these accompany him in his travels.

Cats have been loved by noted persons through the centuries. Mahomet cut off the sleeve of his

robe rather than awaken the pet cat who slept upon it. Petrarch loved his cat and had it embalmed at death. Montaigne could do his best writing only when his left hand fondled his cat.

The love of sailors and soldiers for their pets is well known. In the dreadful explosion of the *Maine* before Havana, two of the three cats belonging to the sailors, perished, but Tom, thirteen years old, beloved by all the seamen, was saved. He was asleep three decks down, or nearly thirty feet below the upper deck. In the agony of dying men, probably nobody thought of Tom. In the morning he was discovered crying piteously, on that part of the wreck which remained above the water. Commodore Wainwright hastened to take him off in a boat to the *Fern*, where he was warmly welcomed.

Nothing attracted me more on the great battleship *Indiana*, battered in the war with Spain, than a basket containing a cat and five kittens, whom the sailors were shielding from the sun with a piece of canvas, and talking to them in terms of endearment.

“Take care of my cat!” were the last words of Dr. Stark, a British surgeon killed by a shell at

Ladysmith, in the war with the Boers. The animal had been his constant companion.

“The cat,” as Harrison Weir says, “is not only a very useful animal about the house and premises, but is also ornamental. It is lithe and beautiful in form, and graceful in action.”

Another well-known English writer says, “There is no animal in existence more sensitive and capable of attachment than the domestic cat, or any of her progeny.”

Cats have often saved life; also houses from burning. At Geneva, N. Y., a child of three attempted to take a rattlesnake. A pet Maltese cat killed it, and saved the child. A similar thing happened in Pennsylvania.

A woman in New York City took into her house a stray and hungry cat. A year later by the explosion of a lamp, the house was set on fire. The cries of the cat aroused the owner, and thus all the inmates of the tenement house were saved.

On the Pacific Coast, the steamer Wildwood went to the bottom of the bay. There was but one man asleep on board at the time of sinking. The boat's cat scratched the face of the sleeper, who threw her away from him. Again she

scratched his face, and cried so vigorously that the man was aroused, climbed the mast, and was rescued.

Cats are often devoted to animals, as well as to persons. My own pet cat, Maltese and white, was the loving friend of my great St. Bernard dog, Bernie. When the mate of the Maltese died, the cat came to the dog, apparently for sympathy. For a year they walked together, shared their bed, and were like human friends. The dog died when six years old, and the lonely cat soon followed, and was buried beside Bernie.

We seem to be coming into a nobler civilization. Queen Victoria said at the Jubilee meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: "No civilization is complete which does not include the dumb and defenseless of God's creatures within the sphere of charity and mercy."

We are growing kinder to animals; homes are being provided for the homeless. There are homes for cats in Dublin, in London, and other English cities, as well as some in Egypt and India. The Gifford Sheltering Home for Animals, in Boston, is doing great good; also the Frances Power Cobbe

Refuge in Indianapolis, Indiana. We are teaching our children to be kind to every living creature. May this story of "Pussy Meow" help forward the good work.

SARAH K. BOLTON.

Pussy Meow

I

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

I AM a little pussy cat, and my name is Meow.

When I was a very small kitty, I lived with my mother and two other kittens in a nice green yard. My mother was a purple Maltese, and she used to tell us with great pride how, as a kitten, she was brought here by her mistress from old Virginia. Her name was Malta, and her children were Nora, Fluffie and Trix.

I was Fluffie.

And we had such a dear little mistress.

Her full name was Annebelle Virginia Lowery, but they called her "Virgie" for short. She had beautiful golden curls, and eyes the color of the sky when the sun shines. Her cheeks were like two little rosy cushions.

Every morning a "bus," filled with pretty children, called to take Miss Virgie to the kindergarten, and sometimes she would take Miriam and Mildred with her. I used to wish she would take me too.

In the garden Miss Virgie had a little playhouse, in a sunny corner of which was our basket and rug, and here also lived Miriam and Mildred. On pleasant afternoons the nurse would bring Miriam and Mildred out under a big shade-tree where there was a bench and a table; and here Miss Virgie sometimes "served tea" in dainty blue china, while we kittens would frolic among the bushes and learn to climb trees. But poor Miriam and Mildred could not have any such fun as we did; they just remained seated on the bench all the time; you see they were only dollies.

My mother could climb clear up to the tops of the tallest trees, and she was allowed to go wherever she pleased, because she was so wise.

Sometimes she would be gone away a long time, and upon her return would bring a mouse or a sparrow for us, and teach us how to play with it. But our favorite plaything was her long bushy tail, of which she seemed to be very proud, and which

she would twist and toss and sway before our eyes in the most tantalizing fashion. Of course, we would all take our turn at trying to catch it, but the minute we thought we had a good hold, the first thing we knew the tail would be over on the other side; and then by the time we got over there, it would be back where it was before. Many times, when, after long chasing, I finally caught hold of the elusive member, and while holding on to it with all my might, I could feel it slipping and sliding through my claws, and before I knew it had gone from me, I would see her proudly waving it in the air again.

One morning, when my mother had gone away as usual, I saw some children at play on the sidewalk, and I thought how nice it would be to be with them. It was very naughty for me to think of such a thing, because we had been told never to go outside the yard; and as neither Trix nor Nora would go with me, I went alone.

As soon as I reached the sidewalk, a big black dog came across the street and barked at me. I started to run back through the gate, but it had closed, and I hadn't time to look for a hole to crawl through. So I ran down the sidewalk, trembling with fright.

When I had run a long way, I went into a yard, but the people there didn't like cats; a boy was sent to chase me through the gate, and I continued my wearisome journey. How I did wish that somebody would take me up, or show me the way home; but nobody seemed to care what became of me. Finally, being so very tired, I crawled in under a fence, and seeing no one around, I lay down in the corner and went to sleep.

I do not know how long I lay there. When I awoke the moon was shining, and I continued my journey down the sidewalk, hoping to find my yard. But when after a long walk I didn't find it, not knowing what else to do, I sat down by a tree and began to cry.

To make me still more wretched and unhappy, two boys came along, and one of them started to pelt me with stones. He was the same boy that had chased me out of his yard that very morning. I suppose he would have killed me had not a kind lady come along just at that moment. I was trying to hide behind the tree so the stones would not hit me, but as soon as the lady saw me, she called one of the boys by name. "Teddy, dear," said she, "I am surprised to see that you will allow such a

heartless thing as this to happen in your presence. Think how your mother would feel if she knew of it."

The lady then stooped down and talked very kindly to me, and I answered her; and when she got up to go, I followed, and cried after her so loudly that she finally picked me up and took me with her. Oh, how glad I was to get away from that dreadful boy and his stones! I kissed the gloves on the hands that held me to show my thankfulness.

My lady friend had walked but a short distance when she stopped at a little house and rang the bell; but the house was dark, and it was a long time before any one opened the door. At last a lady came out, and my friend said, "Isn't this one of your kittens?"

"Yes," said the lady, without even looking at me, "they run away every little while."

Then she took me out of my friend's hands and carried me to the kitchen, and put me in a basket that had a nice soft pad in it, and some other cats. But they did not notice me, and very soon I fell asleep and forgot the day's troubles.

II

BUDGE AND TODDY

THE next morning I was still in the basket when I heard some one say: "Do look, here is a new kitten, a tiger! it must be the one I took in last night, thinking it was mine." The voice was the same that I had heard at the door the evening before.

For a moment I feared that I should lose my nice new home; but when I saw the lady's round, good-natured face, I knew that she could not find it in her heart to turn away a helpless little creature like me, even if she had taken me in by mistake.

After petting the other kittens a while, the lady took me up and looked into my eyes, and said I had a good face. Then a big boy came out and she put me into his arms. I trembled when he took me, for I had learned to be afraid of boys. But this boy handled me very gently, and after looking me all over carefully and pressing me fondly to his cheek, he said, "Why, mamma, this is a

beautiful kitty! Won't you let her stay?" Then he put me very tenderly back into the basket.

"She looks so much like our old Meow," said the lady, "I think we will keep her." You can imagine that this made me very happy.

They named me "Meow," and the other two cats were "Budge" and "Toddy." They were Maltese.

For a time Budge and Toddy acted anything but friendly toward me, but as they were bigger than I, I just kept very quiet, while they stood by the edge of the basket, humping their backs, bristling their tails and grinning at me to their hearts' content. Pretty soon mistress came out with our breakfast, and they ran to meet her; but I remained in the basket until invited to join them. I was glad mistress stayed while we ate, for Budge gave an angry growl every now and then, and Toddy tried his best to crowd me out of the dish. But the breakfast tasted good just the same, because a day's fasting had made me very hungry.

I saw at once that Budge and Toddy were very well-bred cats, for they washed themselves as soon as they had finished the meal, just as my dear mother had taught me to do. But being in a new

place, and amid strange surroundings, somehow I forgot myself for a time, and while Budge and Toddy washed I just sat and watched them. When Toddy had finished, to my great surprise he came over and started to wash me too. I suppose he thought I hadn't been properly taught because I sat and watched him instead of washing myself. But I soon showed him that he was mistaken, and I have ever since strictly observed the rule of washing after meals.

They say folks wash before meals, and that only cats wait until afterward. The reason for this is, as I have heard, that once a cat had caught a nice fat mouse, and was just going to make a dinner of her, when Mousie said: "Shame on you, to eat without first washing yourself." So the cat stopped to wash; and while she did so, Mousie ran back into her hole.

When Budge and Toddy saw that I had really come amongst them to stay they wanted to know where I had come from, and I very gladly told them. As I talked about my proud and beautiful Virginia mother, and my sweet little mistress, Miss Virgie, and her playhouse, they kept moving closer and closer to me; and when I finished, Toddy said

he hoped I would stay, and that he and Budge would do all they could to make it pleasant for me. They both begged me to forgive them for their spiteful conduct in the early morning; from that time on they acted very kindly toward me, and I was permitted to join them in their play.

I soon found that they had many cozy corners all around the yard, as well as in the house, and one of our favorite places was under the porch, where we used to go for safety. You may wonder what I mean by "safety," when we have such a kind mistress and such a good home. I will tell you.

Mistress and the boy are away all day, and very often during those days when we were small, helpless kittens, a certain little boy would come into our yard and annoy us. He had no one to play with, and I suppose he wanted to play with us, but he didn't know how. How I did wish that the "bus" would come and take him to the kindergarten.

Whenever he came in, if we saw him in time, we would run as fast as we could and crawl in between the latticework under the porch, and hide in there till he had gone.

As time went by the fur on my back and sides

became worn very short, because I had such hard work to squeeze through. You see I grew bigger every day, and the hole didn't.

One day our little tormentor tied a string around Toddy's neck, fastened it to his velocipede, and then rode up and down the sidewalk, as fast as he could. And there is no telling how long he would have kept it up if a kind neighbor across the street had not come over and taken Toddy away from him.

When mistress came home that evening, they told her about Eddie's cruelty, and as she had warned him already many times to let her kittens alone, she said she would report the case to the "Humane Agent."

I never learned what the gentleman did, but from that day Eddie did not trouble us for a long time, and we think that next to mistress and the boy, the Humane Agent is our best friend.

But alas for poor Budge and Toddy! A few moons after I came to my new home Toddy disappeared, and we all felt very badly about it. The next day Budge went away, I suppose to look for Toddy, and he never came back. Then for several days mistress and the boy had such sad faces that

it made me very unhappy. They asked the milkman and the grocer and the letter-carrier to look out for the two kittens, but we never heard anything more of them, and I was without any companions for quite a while.

As for me I rather enjoyed being alone, because mistress and the boy paid more attention to me than they had ever done before. At meal-time I was allowed to sit on a chair beside mistress, and at night I slept at the foot of her bed.

But the days seemed very long, until I became acquainted with our neighbor's dog, Dennis, a large handsome fellow with brown curly hair and beautiful brown eyes. Although Dennis had more good things at home than any one dog could eat, for he was always burying something in his yard, yet he came to our house daily for the little titbits that mistress would give to him. But having had one unpleasant experience with a dog I kept at a distance from Dennis; till one day he proved himself a real friend. Two saucy little curs came into my yard and chased me up a tree, when Dennis, with one bound, jumped at them and drove them away, and after that he and I were the best of friends.

III

MY REASONS FOR WRITING THIS STORY

WHEN mistress and the boy are at home, he generally reads aloud to her and at such times I usually sit on his lap or by his side. About the time Budge and Toddy went away he read a story which was written by "Black Beauty," a horse. I thought it was rather peculiar that a horse should write a story. But Black Beauty told people how to take care of horses, how to provide for their comfort and how to sympathize with them, in doing which he set the whole world to thinking for a time about nothing but horses, and in that way did them a very good turn.

By the way, the boy's name is Guy. His eyes are just like Miss Virgie's, and he has beautiful flaxen hair.

Before I knew Guy, I supposed all boys were rude and cruel, but I feel sure now that I was mistaken. One of Guy's dearest friends is Teddy, who was with the boy that threw stones at me on that



GUY

My Reason for Writing this Story 29

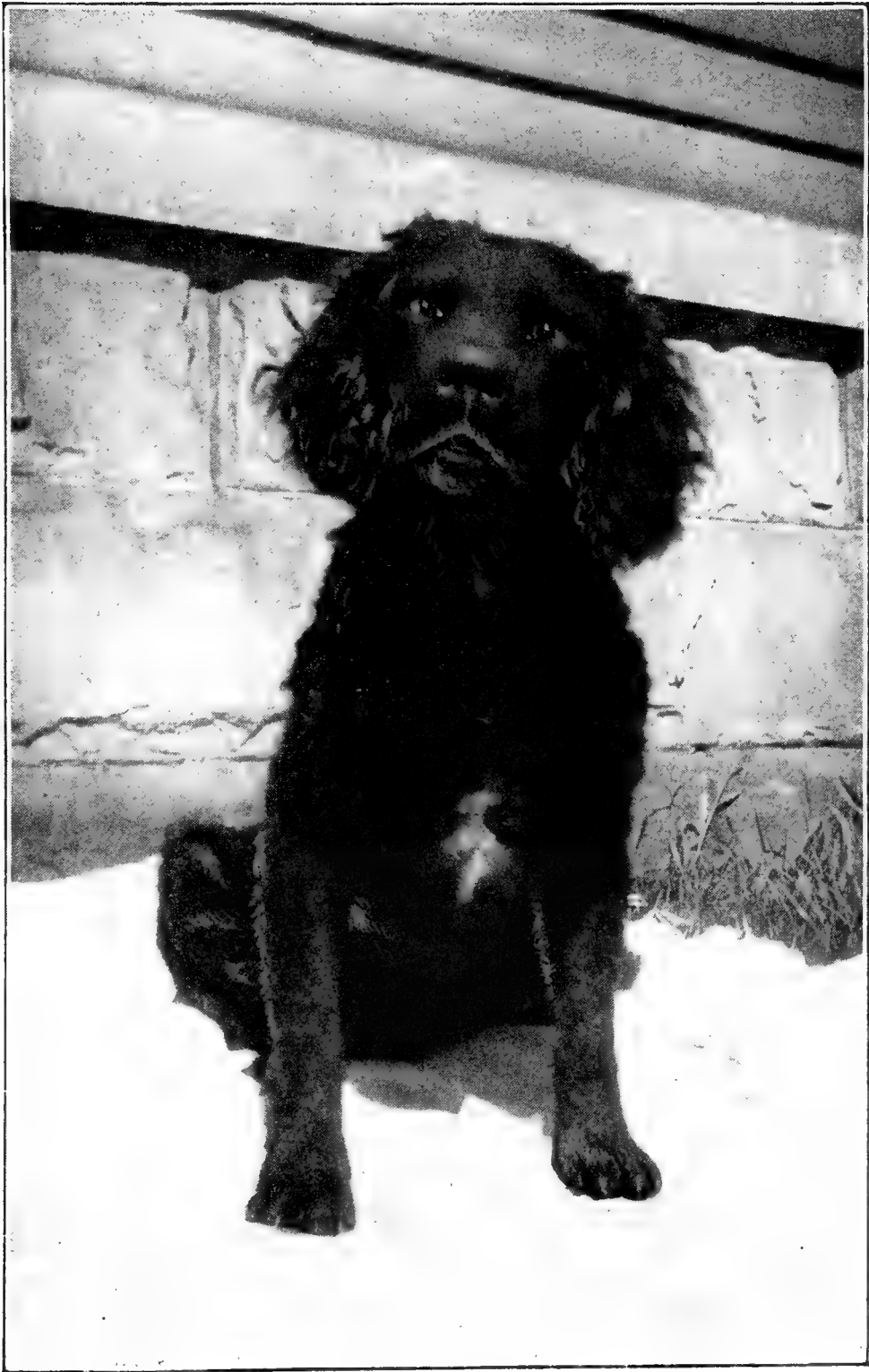
sad day when I was a homeless cat. Teddy came to see Guy quite often, but he always treated me very kindly. I really think it a pity that he should ever have been with that cruel boy.

After Guy had finished reading the story of Black Beauty, he read one written by a dog, "Beautiful Joe." I saw his picture in the book, but I did not think him half as beautiful as my friend Dennis that visits me every day. But Joe had a beautiful spirit, and that counts far more than a beautiful body. Who could read of the cruel blows and kicks and all the other insults which he suffered so patiently at the hands and feet of old Jenkins, without feeling in his inmost soul that henceforth he would defend and protect all helpless and harmless creatures? In this way Joe conferred a lasting benefit upon his fellow-dogs, and even I, who am only a cat, with no natural fondness for dogs, must say that I learned many things from Joe that made me have more respect for dogs. I also became filled with a desire to be as good and useful a cat as Joe was a dog, and it was during those long, lonesome days when I was without any companions that the thought came to me about writing this story. May be you think a cat does not even have thoughts.

How dreadful ! Well, I thought if dogs and horses can write stories, why can't I? And so I concluded to try.

I had often heard mistress read stories about cats, cat shows and cat clubs, but it was always about Persian cats and Angoras, and I made up my mind that my story should be about tigers and Maltese and black cats, because they are considered to be of so very little importance. I have known of many a poor, sick cat just treated as a nuisance, and compelled to stay outdoors ; whereas then, if ever, she needs a warm, comfortable place, and nourishing food.

And when a cat has kittens, she is usually put into the barn, or the basement, if tolerated in the house at all. Now very few kittens will learn orderly habits when raised in a place where they can do as they please ; and when such a kitten is taken into a home it causes no end of trouble. In many cases it is abused and made very miserable, not for any fault of its own, but because it has not been properly trained. This is one reason why there are so many poor tramp cats. Another reason is, that some people will let a cat raise five or six kittens without paying any attention to her needs as to



MY FRIEND DENNIS

My Reason for Writing this Story 31

food or shelter, and the poor things somehow live, or rather, they exist. Then when nobody wants them, as is always the case with kittens raised in this way, they are given to the milkman or to some farmer to be "strayed" out in the country, where no other fate awaits them but slow starvation. In a case like this, five cents' worth of chloroform administered to the kittens at the time of birth, leaving only one alive for the mother cat, would have saved them from the terrible tortures of starvation.

Then too some people who are very kind-hearted themselves, have cruel servants who look upon a pet in the household as an added burden, and who will utterly neglect, if not positively abuse them. Right here I am reminded of an incident told to mistress by a young lady who called one evening. She was doing some writing for a minister, and she said that almost daily her feelings were wrought up at sight of an old black cat, gaunt looking, half-starved, and with a broken leg, hobbling around in the yard. "To-day," said she, "I had some milk left over from my lunch, and I asked the cook for the cat's dish."

"Cat's dish! the cat ain't got no dish, throw it on the walk," was the reply. "Why," continued

the lady, "I saw enough table scraps thrown into the garbage can each day to make a feast for that poor cat, and not one of the good people ever gave her a thought."

Speaking of ministers reminds me of a gentleman that called on mistress one evening, and as I happened to be lying on the library table, they fell to talking about me, and about cats and dogs generally.

"It's all right," said the gentleman, "for people that can afford it, to have pets. But in my experience in visiting among all classes of people, somehow wherever I find a big family of half-fed and neglected children there are sure to be in the same home one or more cats or dogs, and sometimes both; and of course, the food that is given to them ought by rights to go to the children. But the worst of it is, these people seem to think as much of their cats and dogs as they do of their children."

"That is an unintended compliment," said mistress, "which proves the softening and humanizing effect of these pets upon those with whom they associate. And certainly, this more than makes up for the few little extra morsels that they require for their maintenance."

My Reason for Writing this Story 33

Now I have told you some of the things I would like to bring to the notice of ladies and children especially. Oh, if with this story I start all the world to think for awhile about cats—Maltese and tigers and black cats, that are so much exposed to suffering because within the reach of everybody, I shall feel that I have done some real good. And even if I do not write as good a story as did Black Beauty, or Beautiful Joe, you will at least know that I tried to do what I could to help my fellow-cats. And who knows but some cats, older and wiser than myself, may be encouraged by my effort to do more?

IV

A PLEASANT OUTING

WHEN the time came for mistress and Guy to take their summer outing, they did not desert me or leave me to the mercies of our neighbors, as has been the fate of many a poor cat. No; they very thoughtfully made the necessary provision to take me with them.

When they were ready to start, they put me in a nice big bag, which Guy suspended over his shoulder. It was a bag that mistress brought from Switzerland, and I have heard her say it is such a one as the women there carry to market when they go to buy provisions. It had large holes between the stitches so I could look through, and see what was going on.

First we took a long ride on a street car and Guy held me on his lap. But never having been on a car, I was dreadfully afraid of the noise. Guy held me real close to his breast and talked kindly to me,

but by the time I got over being afraid, we were at the end of our ride.

When we alighted from the street car, we boarded a big steamboat on which we rode all day. Mistress allowed me to walk around a little, and I saw the beautiful water and the bright sunshine, and some birds. How birds could live on the water greatly puzzled me.

There were many people on the boat, and some children played with me and gave me cake and popcorn. I thought they must have cats at home, for they knew just what cats like.

But while the children were very polite to me, some of the older people were just the reverse. For instance, there was a woman who poked her umbrella into my side, saying: "There is a cat; what a nuisance!"

Mistress said to her very kindly: "It is my kitty."

Then the woman asked mistress a good many questions about me: why she didn't leave me at home; how she could be bothered with a cat when traveling; or, was it a new "fad."

Mistress told her there was no one at home, and that she thought it cruel to desert a faithful do-

mestic animal. Furthermore, she said, I had been no trouble to her so far, and that this was not the first time she had had a cat for a traveling companion.

Then the woman became more polite to me, and said I had a beautiful coat and a pleasing face.

After a while a big girl came over to where I lay. She came so quickly it frightened me, and I got up and started to run from her, but she grabbed me by the tail and pulled me back.

Of course, I cried out, not so much from pain, as because of the insolence of such treatment.

“What’s the matter, Tabby?” said she.

I said “Me-ow” just as loud as I could.

Mistress told her I was not used to being pulled around by my tail. Then the girl stroked my back and smoothed my fur, and I was no longer afraid. I think she did not mean to frighten me, only she didn’t know the proper way to call a cat.

Mistress told her how I stayed at home alone every day when she was gone, and never ran away, and how I behaved so nicely on the cars. I am sure the girl will be a better friend to cats hereafter.

I had never before been in such a large crowd as

there was on that boat, and I could not help noticing what a difference there is in people. Some in passing by would look at me sneeringly, and even point their fingers; some would take no notice of me at all; others would smile, and still others would bend over and give me a gentle stroke. But the children—bless their dear hearts—they all had good words for me, and some gave me something even better.

As the sun was going down we arrived at a place where the boat stopped and everybody got off. Guy put me into my nice bag, and the next thing I knew we were in a large room in a great big strange house that they called a hotel. Guy got me a saucer of milk for my supper, and I slept all night on mistress' bed.

The next morning we started out right after breakfast and took a long ride in a carriage. I noticed after we had ridden a while that it was a very long distance between houses. Finally we stopped at a nice white cottage with green blinds, standing in a yard that was so long I could not see the next house. They called it a farm.

The weather being terribly hot, the long ride in the carriage had made me very ill; I could hardly

get my breath, and I was dizzy. I lay in the orchard under an apple tree, and mistress sat beside me, wondering what to do. Finally she poured some castor oil down my throat, which tasted very unpleasant; but in a few hours I was all right again, and after that I had a delightful time.

There were two big cats on the farm; one white and the other yellow; and as they had no name, only "Kitty," mistress named the white one "Blanche" and the yellow one "Goldie."

They did not like me at first; in fact they acted just like Budge and Toddy did when I came to live with my mistress. But the next morning mistress took us all in her lap and petted us for a long time; then she gave us some nice warm milk in a big saucer, and we ate breakfast together; and after that Blanche and Goldie were more friendly towards me. But we did not see much of each other, for they spent most of their time out in the field. Their "corner" was a big market-basket on the kitchen porch; but I did not have to share it with them, because I always slept on my mistress' bed.

This reminds me of a wicked slander on cats that I have heard, namely, that it is not safe for

people to sleep in the same room with them for fear they will suck their breath and cause them to suffocate. The only foundation for this is that cats love warmth. When sleeping in a cold room they will seek out the warmest place they can find, and if that happens to be near a person's face, they are apt to go there; not because they want to suck the breath, but simply because they love the warmth that emanates with the breath.

An old gentleman lived on the farm whom Guy called grandpa, and an old lady whom he called grandma, whose portraits I had often seen in mistress' room. Grandpa was abed most of the time, and was visited every day by a man they called "Doctor." It was he who told mistress to give me castor oil.

One day mistress took me into grandpa's room and said, "Father, this is Meow the Second." Although grandpa was too ill to say much to me, still I knew from the kind look on his face, and from his gentle touch, that he was a friend of cats. "I'm very glad to see Meow, but don't hurt Watch's feelings," was all he was able to say, and pretty soon mistress took me out.

Watch was a big shepherd dog that had lived on

the farm for many years. He wanted to be in grandpa's room all the time. When he was admitted he would lie down alongside the bed, and look straight at grandpa all the while, till he was ordered out, and then he just went as far as the door and lay down. There he would stay all day, and unless his food was brought to him, he would go hungry.

Watch never did me any harm, but he wasn't as friendly with me as Dennis. He barked at all strangers, but never hurt anybody.

In front of the house was a very large maple tree under which mistress stretched her hammock, and there in the cool shade we spent many happy days; but Guy spent most of his time at the neighbors helping the boys do their chores.

V

SOME EXPERIENCES ON THE FARM

I HAD never seen any chickens until I visited grandpa's farm, so one day shortly after our arrival I went into the chicken-coop to make them a visit.

A hen was sitting on a lot of eggs, and I had no intention of disturbing her. But when she saw me she began a terrible cackling, and flew away. Then I went up and sat on the eggs myself; but in a few minutes the big rooster came to the coop, followed by nearly all the other roosters and the hens, and such a cackling and crowing I never heard in all my life. It seemed as if every one of the seventy fowl in the barnyard would cry themselves hoarse. I concluded that I was not a welcome visitor, so I left the nest and jumped out of the window. I thought it best not to go through the door with all those cacklers in wait for me.

The stable was empty, because Elsa the cow, and

Kate the horse, were out in the pasture. Elsa had large brown eyes and a beautiful brown coat with a white star on her forehead, and she was very gentle. Guy generally rubbed her back and sides and shooed off the flies while grandma milked her, and we cats were always on hand at milking time. Just as soon as grandma had finished she would always pour some milk into our saucer, and it tasted just about like our city milkman's cream. (Once when Guy came home from school he filled my saucer out of the cream pail, and that's how I know what city cream tastes like.)

Elsa had once been the queen of a large milk-herd, and she seemed very proud of her old Swiss cow-bell which always hung at her neck, suspended from a leather strap. Whenever it was time to bring her in from the pasture, grandma or Guy would take a little bucket containing salt, and stand up on the fence and show it to Elsa. Then as soon as she saw it she would come right along; and, of course, she was always given some salt as soon as she reached the barnyard.

It was Kate that brought us out from the steam-boat landing on that dreadfully hot summer day. There was no real hard work for her to do on the

farm. But she had served grandpa so well during the years of her strength, that, although no longer needed, still she was allowed to remain and enjoy the rest and quiet. All the neighbors seemed to know and respect her, and whenever any of them passed by, she would go up to the fence and whinney, in response to their greeting. Elsa was her constant companion in the pasture, and their lot was indeed a happy one.

Another animal on the farm was Billy, the pig, though I am sorry to say his place was so uninviting I did not care to visit him very often. But really, poor Billy was not to blame; his "pen" was so small, and there was no way for him to get out when he wanted to; how could he keep it clean and tidy?

Why he was singled out to be treated as a prisoner, when all the other animals on the farm were free to roam at will, was more than I could understand, unless it was because grandpa was too ill to attend to him. As I used to see Billy stare through the cracks in the walls of the narrow gloomy prison that shut him away from the great, beautiful world, and as I listened to his ceaseless grunting, I could not help but pity him. Although I did not under-

stand his language, I felt sure that he must be complaining of his unhappy lot.

“How I wish that somebody would write a book for Billy,” said mistress to Guy one day, as they were passing his place, “so that people would be made to think how unjustly he is being treated.”

“Yes,” said Guy, “it’s just as easy to have pigs in clover as in a pen. Have I never told you about the excellent arrangement Uncle Ellison has on his farm?”

“No, you did not; what is it?” said mistress, eagerly.

“Well,” said Guy, “his pig yard is quite a good sized enclosure, extending at the rear into a little grove where the pigs can lie in the cool shade when it is hot. Adjoining this is a similar enclosure, and every year the pigs are changed from one field to the other, and the one last used by the pigs is plowed up and sown to clover. In this way they have a clean, wholesome and comfortable place all the time.”

“This explains why Uncle Ellison gets a higher price for his hogs than any farmer around there,” said mistress. “If grandpa were well, I would tell him about it; but perhaps you could make Billy

just a little happier by spading up the ground inside of his pen."

"Yes," said Guy; "and perhaps the neighbor's boys will help me."

So the next day the boys locked Billy into the corn-crib while they turned the ground in his pen with spades and freshened it; the trough was scalded and scrubbed, and left in the sun to dry. When Billy was led back to his pen, he grunted his thankfulness to his friends the best he knew how. As for me, I concluded to put Uncle Ellison's plan into my story; for who knows but some of the boys who read it may be farmers some day, and will want to try it?

While we were at grandpa's one of his neighbors' hogs was taken sick, and the man brought six little white pigs up to grandpa's because he wished to separate them from their mother, for fear they too might catch the disease. I never saw anything prettier than those little pigs, and they were just as clean as so many kittens. The man put them into an old pen not far from Billy's, and there they squealed and grunted to their hearts' content, and stuck their noses through every little crack in the pen. I noticed that some of the boards were loose

so that they could wiggle them up and down, and each one tried to make them wiggle a little more than the others had done before him. One day at dinner time, when I was in my usual place on the window-sill, suddenly I saw a white streak shooting through the orchard and out into the road, and just then Guy jumped up and said: "There go the pigs."

They had succeeded in loosening one of the boards and making their escape, and the last I saw of them they were running down the road to their mother as fast as they could, leaving a big cloud of dust behind them.

This set me to thinking on pigs in general, and I concluded that they are by nature intelligent and clean, and like the rest of us, all they want is a chance.

VI

HOME AGAIN

ONE morning very early mistress packed up her things and Guy's, and Kate was hitched up to the carriage and brought up to the side of the house. Everybody was very sad; and I couldn't understand what it all meant, till I saw mistress and Guy bid grandpa good-bye. Grandpa was still lying in bed, with Watch by his side, and they were all crying.

Blanche and Goldie were just ready to go out into the field, but they stopped to bid me good-bye, and said they were sorry to have me go now that they had got acquainted with me; and they hoped that another summer I would visit them again.

I was put into my bag as usual; and Guy took me with him into the carriage. Kate took us to the boat landing; and in a short time we were afloat on the beautiful blue water.

The boat was crowded with people, and it was very warm. I was tired and wanted to sleep, so mistress took me into her stateroom, where I lay on the bed and had a nice rest. Soon after I awoke we reached a place where we alighted and took dinner at a large hotel. Guy carried the bag in which I was, suspended over his shoulder by a leather strap, and when he was seated at the table he slipped the bag over my head and fed me on his lap. You must remember that at that time I was still a kitten, about half grown.

After dinner we sat on the lawn in front of the hotel, and I was allowed to run around at will till it was time to return to the boat. I was listening to the music of the band, when I espied on the piazza a poodle dog. As soon as he saw me, he came down the steps and I, thinking to exchange greetings with him, walked over to meet him. I don't know whether he objected to the curve in my back, or the jug handle shape of my tail, but evidently Mr. Poodle was not in the habit of meeting lady cats. Instead of responding to my greeting in a gentlemanly manner, he bent low on his fore-legs and barked at me.

At this I showed him the color of my teeth, and

the length of my claws, and he immediately retreated, his tail drawn tightly between his legs.

“What next?” you say. Well, I chased some grasshoppers, and caught a fly or two, and by that time we had to return to the boat to resume our journey.

At the hotel mistress met some friends, who were going on the same boat, and welcome ones they were, for they were the first people we had met on our entire journey that did not “exclaim” at seeing a cat in the party.

The one I liked best of all was Miss Wallace, a very lovely young lady, who held me on her lap nearly all the time. I was very thankful to her, for it was better than being out where I would get my tail pulled and umbrellas poked into my side. Miss Wallace told us about her kitty at home, Nellie, of purest white; and she said she was just homesick to see her, because she had been away over a week.

“I suppose, of course, you left her in somebody’s care,” said mistress.

“Yes, indeed,” said Miss Wallace, “I would not think of such a thing as leaving her uncared for.”

I was not at all surprised to hear Miss Wallace’s

answer, for I knew the moment I saw her gentle face and soft brown eyes, that she had a tender and sympathetic heart. I think I must have taken a nap on her lap, for it seemed in a very little while the boat stopped at the landing whence I had started on my first trip a few weeks before.

The street cars took us quickly to the little brown house on Poplar Avenue, which is dearer to me than any farm, hotel, or floating palace that I have ever seen. Dennis received us with a joyous bark, and with that merry wag of his tail which speaks such volumes of happiness. My cushion, my pad, and the dear sunny porch were more precious to me than ever before. Only one thing worried me! I had grown too big for the hole through which I used to crawl in under the porch, and wondered where I would go for safety in case of danger. But I soon found that Dennis was all the "safety" I needed, for he stayed with me nearly all the time; and whenever any bad boys or dogs came into our yard he promptly chased them out with that powerful bark of his. And I found him to be a very useful as well as agreeable companion.

There is a beautiful song which I have often

heard, that there is no place like home, but I never really understood the meaning of those words until I had been away from my home and my friend.

So you see I was doubly thankful, first because mistress took me with her on her vacation, and second because I had such a happy home-coming.

VII

NEW COMPANIONS

ONE morning soon after we returned from the farm Guy brought into the house, dripping wet, a little Maltese kitty, which he said he found crying in a vacant lot on his way to school. My heart went out to the poor little thing, shivering with cold and frightened, and coming from no one knew where.

Mistress rubbed the kitty's coat dry with a towel, and smoothed it all out with a coarse comb. Then she fixed her a nice warm bed in a little basket, and in a short time she dozed off into a nap. As I sat looking at the little stranger I was reminded of the time when I was taken into this dear home in just about as sorry a plight, and I made up my mind to give her a better welcome than I had received from Budge and Toddy.

Her nap over, the little kitty looked as plump and bright as anything, and mistress named her "Beauty." She was a talkative little creature, and

before the day was over had told me her whole history. Said she, "My home is in a grocery store, where I have been living with my mother and three other kittens in a barrel. This morning our master gave me to a boy to take home to his sister. But he squeezed me so hard, I scratched him, and then he threw me out on the wet grass and walked away."

"How cruel," said I, "but don't think that all boys are like him, for I know some that are just as kind as anybody."

"Then I tried to go back and find my mother," said Beauty, "and I went up to the door of a place that looked like my home, but as I stood there crying, a man came out and picked me up very harshly, and threw me out onto the sidewalk. It seemed as if all the world were against me, and I tried to crawl away to a place where no one would find me, when a boy came along who picked me up very tenderly, and it was he who brought me here."

I told Beauty of my own experience as a homeless cat and bade her be thankful that she had fallen into such good hands.

During the evening we played together by the beautiful moonlight, but all at once I missed her,

and when mistress called us in for the night I was the only one to respond. I have no doubt that Beauty went to look for her mother.

After Budge and Toddy left, mistress tied a pretty colored ribbon around my neck, with the street and number, 127 Poplar Avenue, plainly written on it in black ink. She had also tied one around Beauty's neck, and for this reason she expected that Beauty would be returned. But we looked for her in vain.

One evening when mistress and Guy were talking about Beauty, mistress said: "I presume she has found a home; I only hope it is a good one."

"I don't think it is," said Guy. "Anybody that would steal a cat would not treat her well after he got her." And I think he was right, for it was just as bad as stealing, to keep a cat that had the street and number written on his necktie. How foolish Beauty was to leave such a good home.

Not many days after Beauty's departure, a little girl brought us a light colored tiger kitty, which she said she had found in front of a vacant house, cold and hungry, and she brought her to us because she thought it was our little Beauty.

Mistress petted the little thing, and praised the

little girl for being so kind and thoughtful in trying to find its home. She asked the little girl to take it to her own home and keep it, but she said her mother would not permit her to have a kitty because they lived in a flat, or she would be only too glad to keep it. So then, rather than have the little thing turned out without a home, mistress allowed it to remain, and she named it "Beauty" after the last one.

On the following morning one of our neighbors, having seen two strange kittens in the yard within so short a time, said to mistress: "What are you keeping over there, a cat refuge, or a hospital?"

"Why both," said mistress. "I wouldn't turn a stray cat away, much less a sick one."

The lady said no more.

The little stranger seemed so thankful for a nice warm basket (I shared mine with her) she hardly left it the entire day, except to go to her meals. She would lap a whole saucer full of milk, and ask for more, and mistress fed her till she had all she wanted. I tried to find out where she had lived, but she seemed to feel so grieved at the way she had been treated, that it was fully three days before

she finally consented to talk about it. Then she told me that the folks all left the house and all the things were loaded on a wagon and taken away. Said she, "I waited day after day on the doorsteps hoping they would come back. All I had to eat was what I could find in the ash pile, and nights I crawled into an old stovepipe."

This was so much worse than anything I had ever experienced, or even heard of, I hadn't a word to say in reply.

But evidently the cold and hunger that she had suffered had had their effect on little Beauty. Although she had the best of care, still a few days later she was taken so very ill one night that it caused her to groan most pitifully ; and in the morning when Guy came down, her lifeless form lay on the floor, cold and stiff.

Mistress very tenderly wrapped the little dead body in some soft white tissue paper, and put it in a box, and Guy buried it in the rear of the yard, marking the spot with a stake on which he printed :

" SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF BEAUTY."

Then mistress planted some mignonette and pansies on the spot, and Guy fenced it in with pieces

of arched wire, so that it made a nice little flower-bed.

After it was all over I heard mistress say to Guy: "Aren't you glad we have been kind to this little creature during the few days of her life that she was with us?"

"I was just thinking how sorry I would be if I hadn't been kind to her," said Guy. "Yesterday when she whined so I was tempted to put her out, but I am glad now I didn't; I guess she was sick then."

"Yes," said mistress, "when animals act ill-natured or fretful, it is generally because they are not well; and instead of being impatient with them, we ought to be all the more tender, and see whether we cannot find out the cause of their trouble, and relieve them."

For several days after Beauty's death I was again without a companion, but I wasn't so lonesome as at first when Budge and Toddy went way, because I had Dennis; and besides, it was still lovely summer weather. I used to sit on the window-ledge and watch for the school-children to come by; and when I saw them, it made me very happy, for I knew then that I would soon see my friend Guy.

As soon as he came into the yard I'd jump down and go into the house with him, and generally he would give me some of his bread and milk. Then he would practice a while on his violin, and I dearly loved to listen to the music. Sometimes he would mow the lawn and water it. He always had everything very nice for mistress when she came home. If only he could have stayed at home all day, Dennis and I couldn't have wished for a dearer companion.

VIII

BUDGE AND TODDY THE SECOND

ABOUT a month after the death of Beauty, a little girl came one day with four tiny kittens in a basket, some tigers and some Maltese, and I heard her beg mistress to adopt one of them.

Mistress said at first that she did not care for any more cats. But the little girl was so persistent, and the kittens in the basket looked so bright and pretty, mistress was persuaded to take a closer look at them ; and as I saw her take them up and fondle them, I felt pretty sure what the result would be.

“ I will take two,” said she, “ for if I should take but one away from her companions and from her mother, it would get lonely and homesick ; besides, a little girl who tries to get good homes for helpless kitties ought to be encouraged.”

This made the little girl very happy, for she knew her kittens would have a good home with mistress ; and she went away with only two remaining in the basket.

My new companions were named Budge and Toddy, after the two that had left us. I became friendly with them at once, for I had learned by this time that mistress was a good judge of cats, and that I was perfectly safe in associating freely with those of her choice. The only unpleasant thing about Budge and Toddy was, they had fleas, and, of course, I was visited by some of them; but after a few baths with Spratt's soap we got quite rid of them. I will tell you how it was done, for mistress seemed to know just the right way.

First she made a nice warm suds, and saturated our necks thoroughly with it. She called this the "dead line" because the fleas could not crawl into our eyes, but had to stay back and be drowned. Then she rubbed the suds into the skin all over our bodies, and used a coarse comb so as to have it penetrate the fur clear to the skin, carefully shielding our eyes. Guy always assisted by holding us while she did the washing. He would hold the front legs in one hand and the hind legs in the other, which gave mistress complete control of the body as it lay in the suds, and Guy would turn it as she directed.

After we were thoroughly washed, mistress rinsed us off in plenty of clean warm water, wiped us dry

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with a Turkish towel, and gave us a good combing. Then we lay on our cushions in a sunny spot of the room, and in winter time she put the cushion near the register. When dry, she set us on a big newspaper, and gave us a thorough brushing, and it was surprising how the dead fleas would drop out. Then she folded the paper and burned it. After three such baths the troublesome little things completely disappeared.

Budge is a Maltese, very short and fat, with shaggy coat, short bushy tail, and a white "breast-pin."

Toddy is long and slender, with a smooth, soft coat and a long tail. He is a tiger cat like myself. He is livelier and more mischievous than Budge, and in a tussle generally comes out ahead.

Many times I have seen Budge quietly sitting on his cushion, perhaps watching a fly, or purring contentedly to himself, not suspecting any harm or danger, when Toddy, stealthily aiming from a distance, would jump upon him so suddenly as to almost take his breath away. Then they would roll over the floor, first one on top, then the other, biting, kicking and mauling each other, until the peaceful room was turned into a veritable arena.

One round was scarcely finished before another was started. By turns they would hump their backs, turn down their ears, bristle their tails, or sway them swiftly to and fro, all the while eyeing each other with most defiant expression. At last the pent-up tempest breaks forth, but the battle proves too fierce for Budge and after several more rounds he seeks refuge on a chair only to find himself further pursued. The chair has a cane seat, and Toddy makes a fresh attack from beneath.

At last when it is all over, Toddy meekly kisses his victim, and says: "Never mind, Budge, you know I was only in fun."

One morning when we were up in mistress' room, she made a deep dent in our cushion and put Budge into it. He was then still very small, and it looked as if he was sitting in a little cave with only his head outside.

Pretty soon Toddy came along, and when he saw Budge in so snug a place, he walked all around him viewing him from every side. It was a rather cool morning, and he wanted to get in there too. But seeing there was not enough room by the side of Budge he got in front of him and began caressing him and washing his face and neck. Budge

liked this so well that he moved closer and closer to Toddy, and in so doing got partly out of his cave.

This was just what Toddy wanted. When by means of his cunning scheme, he had tempted Budge out far enough, he put his paw behind him, and with a masterly shove, ousted him from the coveted place, and backed into it himself.

I have always thought that Budge laid this trick of Toddy's up in a corner of his little heart; for, although he seemed to take it good-naturedly at the time, yet he lay in wait when Toddy came down the stairs. But it seemed as though Toddy was expecting something of the kind, for the moment Budge advanced toward him, Toddy jumped up in the air, and Budge shot through under him as though darting through an arch, so swiftly that he ran pell-mell into a basin of water which was being used to clean the floor.

"The charge of the Light Brigade," said Guy, coming down the stairs behind Toddy.

"No, it's the Battle of Waterloo," replied mistress.

With such playful companions as these, you can imagine what delightful times I have had.

IX

A HAPPY HOME

EVERY morning after breakfast mistress reads in a book called the "Bible," and when she closes it, they both kneel down in the bay window while she talks to the chair. Sometimes when the sun shines so nice and warm upon her back, I just jump up there and have a nice purr, which always makes Guy laugh.

Some of the stories they have read in the Bible were about men and women and children and goats and sheep and cattle. I have listened breathlessly many times for something about cats, but so far not one has been mentioned. But perhaps those things all happened before there were any cats. One time the story was about an old man who died leaving six daughters¹ and they were afraid that because they had no big brothers they would not get their share. So they went to Moses, their captain, and asked him about it, and he said that

¹ Vid. Numbers xxvii. 1-8.

they should have their share just the same as if they were sons, instead of daughters. After the story was finished mistress asked Guy, as she usually did, what that meant, and what he had learned from it. He studied for quite a while before he answered her, then he said, "Well, I guess that means women's rights."

Another time they were reading about a very great king who sat on a throne, and a queen from another country who had heard about his wonderful wisdom came to ask him a very hard question to see whether what she had heard was true.¹

"What was the question she asked?" said Guy, after the reading was finished.

"I don't know," said mistress; "the Bible does not tell us what it was."

"I think I know what it was," said he. "She asked him 'who made God?'"

After they have spent a half hour or so in this way, they lock up the house and go away; but they always leave a nice lunch for us, and a dish of fresh water.

I know of many poor cats that never get a drop of water at home. They have to go and hunt for

¹ Vid. 1 Kings x. 1.

it in ditches and puddles, and then are blamed for not keeping a clean, soft, fluffy coat. Anybody ought to know that we can't be expending moisture through our tongue, washing and scrubbing our coats, unless we can drink water whenever we want it. Some people think it answers the purpose just as well if they give us milk, and dear knows it's true enough of the milk that some cats get. But we would prefer to have our milk straight, and our water likewise.

Our principal food is fresh boiled meat, mashed potatoes, and milk, and in summer-time we also get sweet peas, asparagus, beans and corn. Once a week we get salmon mixed with bread crumbs or mashed potatoes.

Once I came very near getting into trouble through my fondness for canned beans. I saw a can on the ash pile, and in trying to get what beans were left in the bottom I got my nose in too far. Imagine my shame, when I could not get it out again, and was obliged to go about with a tin can for a muzzle till Guy came home and took it off.

In pleasant weather our food is left on the kitchen porch, which, with our pads and cushions looks like a little summer parlor. There we stay in the bright

sunshine, or we play in the grass, climb the fences, play hide-and-seeek and roll in our catnip bed.

In cold weather a window is left open into the basement so we can go down to the nice warm furnace room, where we have a great big clothes-basket lined with a clean soft pad. Mistress knows that cats, like other creatures, want a bed long enough so they can stretch themselves out full length when they feel like it.

Of course, we sometimes sleep in other places beside our basket. For awhile an old cap of Guy's lay on the basement floor, and I used to cuddle up in it to take my nap, because it just fitted me. One day I was just nicely settled in it when Toddy came and lay on top of me, and no sooner had we got ourselves nicely fixed for a nap than Budge came crawling over both of us, trying to get on top of Toddy. But Toddy's body was too round and his coat too smooth and slippery for Budge to get a good hold, and after sliding off several times he finally went and took his nap in an old sprinkling can.

After supper we have the greatest frolic of the day in the library. In his kittenhood Toddy was a great athlete, and whenever a certain chair with a

very high back happened to be near enough, he would climb to the top of it and mount the high bookcase, from which he would look down at the rest of us with a very victorious air.

One evening Budge watched him from mistress' lap, his little breast swelling with ambition to do likewise. The moment Toddy alighted, Budge mounted the high-back chair, and craned his neck toward the desired spot. But he evidently thought it too great a risk; for he gave mistress a very pleading look which had the desired effect; she moved the chair closer, and Budge scrambled up its back, whence, with a bold leap, he easily spanned the space to the bookcase.

On the top shelf are the pictures of some of our friends. Miss Willard received his most respectful attention, I suppose because she was the mistress of the wonderful "Tootsie" we have all heard about. Tender, lingering glances were also bestowed upon our little friends Don and Winifred. But the beautiful and charming Mrs. Cleveland received his fondest admiration. So proudly did he sway his bushy tail when standing in her presence that several persons of less distinction were sent reeling to the floor. Then, having been associated

for a little while in his life with great people he sought his humble lodging behind the cook-stove and took a nap.

One of my favorite places used to be on top of the wash-stand in the bath-room. One day after Guy had finished washing he left the water running just a little tiny stream into the wash-bowl. I thought it was a string, and in trying to catch it I fell, and in an instant I was flat on my back in the bottom of the bowl. I struggled to get on my feet again, but it was of no use; the side of the bowl was so smooth, there was nothing that I could get hold of to pull myself up on, and Guy just stood there laughing, and calling everybody in the house to come and see the plight I was in. At last when he had had all the fun he wanted at my expense, he pulled me out, and I have steered clear of wash-bowls ever since.

One of our dearest sports during those mirthful days was playing hide-and-seek behind the portières, and chasing each other from one room into the other. But the race was usually of short duration, for first thing we knew we were all in a heap in the middle of the floor, and we were generally in the midst of our frolic when the horrid

bedtime came and we had to go to our basket. Sometimes we hid behind the bookcases so that Guy couldn't get us. But I know this wasn't nice, and I feel ashamed even now for ever having done it.

X

OUR HAPPIEST DAYS

ON Saturdays mistress comes home earlier than usual. Then we get our coats brushed, and wiped off with a damp cloth, and we put on the finishing touches with that dexterous little scrubbing brush which every cat carries between his jaws. Then mistress changes the covers of our cushions and gives us clean pads.

I always purr when mistress brushes me, to let her know that I like it; and Budge likes it so well, he keeps turning himself so the brush will strike him at every point. I believe the brushing and the good food we get make us have such soft and glossy coats, and such fine bushy tails.

One day after Budge had been thoroughly groomed he concluded that he would go on an exploring tour, and, being so nice and clean, he was permitted to go wherever he pleased.

First he went on mistress' desk, and pretended to read a letter from grandpa; then he played a

tune on the piano. But nothing seemed to satisfy him till he mounted the book shelves, his favorite resting-place, and finding a nice shiny piece of paper there he proceeded to lie upon it and purr himself to sleep. But something was evidently wrong about that shiny paper. He arose to go elsewhere but the paper went with him. You see, it was a sheet of fly-paper, and the fluttering noise it made so frightened poor Budge that he ran from one room to another in his frantic efforts to get rid of it.

As quicky as mistress was able to get hold of the poor creature, she pulled the paper off, but with it came also a portion of Budge's coat. This was such a brand new experience for Budge, he concluded to go to a quiet place to think it over; and finding an old grape basket in the yard he crawled in and fell asleep.

Speaking of Budge's favorite resting-place on the book shelf reminds me of a story I have heard mistress tell about "Röteli" a red tiger cat away over in Switzerland that was fond of taking his naps in the oven. One day the oven door was shut without the cat being noticed, and a fire made in the stove, for the housekeeper wanted to cook



"HE CRAWLED IN AND FELL ASLEEP"

dinner. She heard some dreadful, agonizing cries, but as she could not see the cat around anywhere, and being busy with her work, she paid no further attention. The roast was soon prepared, and as the housekeeper opened the oven door to put it in, behold there was poor Röteli lying almost lifeless with his tongue hanging out of his mouth. Immediately the housekeeper knew just what to do: she sprinkled Röteli with cold water and dropped water on his tongue till he revived, and with the good care he received, regained his health and lived many years more. I hope that all housekeepers who have cats will take warning, and always look into the oven before they close it.

Sunday I like best of all, because then mistress and Guy are at home all day, except a little while in the morning. The first thing on Sunday morning each of us gets a fresh ribbon tied around his neck and, of course, then we make ourselves very clean. Mistress ties the ribbon very carefully, so that it does not pull our hair, and she cuts the loops. The reason for this is, as I heard her tell Guy, that once a cat was jumping across a fence, when a loop of her ribbon was caught in one of the pickets; and the poor cat hung there and

miserably strangled to death, before any one came to her rescue.

On pleasant Sunday afternoons Guy brings the porch rug and cushions out in the yard, and then we have what we look forward to during the whole week, a long visit from our mistress.

Sometimes mistress takes us for a walk, and I never shall forget one pleasant moonlight evening when we went out with mistress and another lady. It was on a street that had no houses on it, only tall grass and catnip, and we were playing a game of hide and go seek, when suddenly mistress called us to her and picked up Toddy and me. She tried to get Budge, too, but he was a little stubborn ; instead of coming to her, he ran to the middle of the street, where a gentleman was riding, accompanied by a big dog. In an instant the air was full of howls, hisses, growls and fur, and Budge and the dog were all mixed up in a cloud of dust. I wanted to go too, but mistress held me so tightly I could not get away.

The gentleman alighted from his wheel and called "Hector," but the poor dog could not get away just then. When he finally became disentangled he drew his tail very tightly between his

legs and ran away as fast as he could, still howling piteously.

Mistress was evidently pleased with Budge for his courage in so fearlessly attacking a dog much bigger than himself, but she was also sorry for the poor vanquished dog, and said so to his master. But the gentleman said that the dog merely retired because he was too noble to attack an animal smaller than himself, and not at all because he considered himself vanquished.

But however that may be, I'm afraid it wasn't very nice for Budge to engage in such a skirmish on a Sunday.

XI

BETSY WHITEFOOT

SOME time after Beauty's death, one day an old gray cat with white toes came on our back porch, and helped herself to a drink of water. She had a distressed and hungry look, and I am sure she had not had a bath or a brushing in a long time, for her coat was very rough and soiled.

Budge and Toddy were afraid of her, and ran back of the ash bin; but I stayed to see what mistress would do.

I noticed that in spots the hair on the cat's body was entirely gone; the flesh was covered with bleeding sores, and her tail had scarcely any hair on it.

Guy called us cats together and sent us into the kitchen, but we could look through the screen door and see what was going on. He gave the poor creature a big saucer of fresh warm milk, which she lapped up very greedily, asking for more till she had finished three saucers full.

When mistress came home she looked at the cat, but did not touch her. She gave Guy some money and a bottle and sent him to the drug store for some medicine.

The poor cat was so tired she did not even wash after eating, but lay right down on the old door-mat. I think she had walked a long while before she found a place where she was allowed to rest. Before Guy returned from the store she was fast asleep.

Mistress poured some of the medicine on a small cotton pad, and placed it by the cat's nose. Then she quickly covered her up with a tub, and Guy sat on top of it.

The cat whined and struggled for a few seconds, then gradually her breathing became heavier, but in less than a minute she was perfectly quiet. She had gone to her long and peaceful sleep, and I have no doubt that if she ever sees mistress in that beautiful place they tell about, where there are no homeless and hungry creatures, she will thank her for the kind act which ended her wretched existence.

The tub was not removed till the following morning, when Guy improvised a little casket for

the body and buried it by the side of Beauty, marking the spot with a stake on which he wrote:

“SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF THE UNKNOWN DEAD,”

and mistress planted some heliotrope upon it.

Meanwhile one of our neighbors was sitting on her kitchen porch in full view of the whole proceeding, and I expected every minute that she would say something sarcastic about a “cat funeral” or a “cat hospital,” as she had done before. She was busily plying the needle on her beautiful fancy work. As soon as mistress had finished planting the flowers, the lady came to the fence and said:

“I should think you would have your cats wear black ribbons when they are attending a funeral;” and without waiting for a reply, she held up her fancy work and asked mistress how she liked it. It was a doily stamped with a group of kittens playing ring-around the rosies, and several of the figures had already been worked in beautiful colored silk.

“It must be pleasant, no doubt,” said mistress, “to work beautiful figures of happy creatures upon canvas; but I prefer to give joy and happiness to

the living. And as for the emblem you speak of, to my mind flowers symbolize the transition of life far more fitly than do the time-worn weeds of mourning."

The lady made no answer to this at all, and mistress went into the house, leaving her alone with her fancy work.

Before we were allowed to go on the porch again, it was thoroughly scrubbed with boiling water; the tub was scalded, and the old mat was burned.

On the following day a neighboring cat, whom I have since learned to know as Jack, came into our yard, and I noticed that he persistently sniffed around the little fresh mound.

"What is in there?" said he, after he had visited it for the third time.

I told him about the sad occurrence of the day before.

"Was it a gray cat with white toes?"

I told him it was.

"Poor Betsy Whitefoot," said Jack, in tones of real anguish. "I have shared my meals with her ever since the Mortons went to their summer house in the country. A better mouser never lived than

Betsy, and how they could so cruelly desert her is more than I can understand.”

I could plainly see that Jack was filled with wrath and bitterness toward the people who had caused his friend so much sorrow, and I suggested to him that we go up in one of the poplar trees where we could talk over the matter quietly, and without attracting attention.

Jack readily assented, and when we had found a nice comfortable place he went on telling me more about the Mortons.

“Last winter,” said he, “during that dreadfully cold spell some kittens came to Betsy, and they made her stay in the cold shed without even a box or basket, and all that she could find to lay the kittens on was some straw in a corner of the floor. Of course the poor little things all got dreadfully sore eyes; two became completely blind; and one by one they drooped and died, till even Betsy herself told me she was thankful they were out of their misery, and that she hoped she would never have any more. And by the way, there goes Will Morton now,” said Jack, pointing down to the sidewalk. “Take a good look at him, and always avoid him if he comes your way.”

It was unnecessary for Jack to administer the caution, for the lad was no stranger to me ; indeed he was the very boy who pelted me with stones on that hapless day when I strayed away from my mother. I never forgot him, for from time to time I would see him pass our house, usually puffing away at a cigarette, and accompanied by rough looking hard-faced boys.

Jack could not restrain himself from telling all that was in his heart about the dreadful Mortons. Said he: " Last winter Will went on a journey with his uncle, and he promised faithfully to write to his mother twice a week. But during four weeks he never wrote her even a postal card. And many a Sunday when his mother thinks he is in Sunday-school, I have seen him out in the alley with his companions, smoking and listening to rude stories. It all goes to show that he has as little respect for her feelings as she has for those of her cat."

I was strongly tempted to tell Jack my own experience with Will Morton, but I felt that he had enough of heaviness on his mind, and I tried my best to think of something pleasant. I told him how kindly mistress had received Betsy, and how

gently she put her to sleep, and it seemed to lessen somewhat the grief which he felt for his departed friend.

“I am thankful,” said he, “that there are some people in this world who realize that even a poor sick cat has some rights, and I hope that the day is not far off when every town and city will have a place where dumb animals that are deserted or lost or sick, can be taken in for protection and care.”

I told him that I hoped so too, for I knew that only a short time ago, mistress had had an experience which made us all feel the need of such a place. I heard her tell Guy of a poor sick and homeless pug dog she saw on the street, and how she stopped to put a court-plaster over a raw spot on his ear. Of course, the dog felt that she was his friend, and he followed her to her office. But she had no place to keep him, so she sent word to the Dog Hospital about it. She might have called the Humane Agent to come and shoot the dog, but she thought he was a nice animal and worth saving.

Well, the hospital man came and examined the dog, said he was old and sick, not worth trying to save, and that the only thing he could do for him

was to chloroform him and take him to the glue factory. Mistress told him to do that ; but she had to pay him two dollars before he would do another thing for the dog. A hospital of that kind is all right for an animal whose master is able to pay ; it does not as a rule help poor homeless creatures. My idea of a hospital is one where any animal, no matter how poor or sick or unsightly, is welcomed, and either nursed back to health or put out of its misery. I have heard that in some large cities kind-hearted people have founded such asylums. But we must hope and pray that good people may be found in every town and city, willing to devote a portion of their means to the relief of suffering animals.

XII

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

ONE pleasant Saturday afternoon I was awakened from my nap by a sound as of rustling foliage, and the room seemed to be suddenly filled with the odor of fresh violets. I opened my eyes and saw a very stately-looking lady, dressed in a beautiful silk gown and a hat that was covered with gaily colored birds, all having their wings spread as if about to fly away. She was seated in the high-back chair, and I quickly climbed up on it from the rear, and was just ready to spring upon the birds, when she gave a dreadful scream and ran out onto the porch.

At this, mistress came rushing down-stairs, and the lady told her with frantic gestures and loud exclamations what a dreadfully rude thing I had done to her. Mistress led her back into the parlor, and got her quieted as well as she could, but presently Budge and Toddy, who had been napping in the bay-window seat, also came into the parlor.

“Are all of these cats yours?” said the lady, with

apparent astonishment. "I should think they would be a dreadful nuisance."

I could see that mistress was annoyed by the remark, but she answered her very gently, and said: "It depends on your treatment of cats, Mrs. Cotton, whether they will be a nuisance or a pleasure. I have always found them a pleasure, and besides, I have a special purpose in keeping pets."

"A purpose in keeping cats!" exclaimed the lady; "do tell me what it is."

"It is to teach my boy to be tender and humane toward all animals; and as we cannot afford expensive pets like dogs and horses, we are satisfied with cats."

"You are the first person I ever heard speak of a purpose in keeping cats," said Mrs. Cotton. "I always supposed that people had cats because they just happened to come to them."

"That is not the case with these cats," replied mistress. "We formerly lived in a flat where we could not keep pets, and that is one of the reasons why I went to housekeeping."

"But do you not find it very expensive to keep house for just you two?"

“ We do,” said mistress, “ but it is the money that is wisely expended, after all, that brings the largest returns. To many people, no doubt, our modern flats are a great boon, affording comfort and safety that they could not possibly secure elsewhere. But to my mind, the landlord who banishes children from his flat is a public benefactor, however selfish may be his motives. A child should have a home in the truest sense of that precious word, a home with lawn and garden, with room for pets and tools and playthings, affording him ample opportunity to give wholesome expression to his feelings. It is the life lived day by day in the home that moulds and fashions a child’s character, rather than any training he receives in school. Spend your money right now in *forming* correct ideas, and encouraging expression of them, rather than save it by ignoble economy, only to be spent later in the vain attempt to *reform* a character perverted and dwarfed through narrow and contracted living.”

“ I have never before had my thoughts turned to this subject,” said Mrs. Cotton, looking very earnestly into mistress’ face, “ but I believe what you say is true. I am so thankful my children are still young, that I may profit by your excellent ideas.

And as for cats, I never before thought they were good for anything, having been brought up to think of them as uncanny creatures, something to be abhorred and dreaded. But as my little boy has written Santa Claus to bring him a kitty for a Christmas gift, I suppose I will have to give up my prejudice."

"It is the superstition of a by-gone age," said mistress; "but a happier day is coming, when the cat will be given her rightful place as a household pet; and through gentle treatment her nature will become still more refined and ennobled. Notwithstanding all that has been said about their selfish disposition, my cats have at times shown great consideration for each other. For instance, once I gave them their milk in a narrow dish, where only one could lap at a time, and to my great surprise they took turns. On another occasion I had prepared a plate of meat for them, arranging each cat's portion by itself. Budge and Meow were not present, so Toddy ate his portion and left theirs untouched."

"That is certainly remarkable," said Mrs. Cotton. "I shall no longer object to having one in our house. But I fear we shall no sooner have become

attached to her before she will leave us. My neighbor has had three very pretty kittens given her during the last six months, and not one stayed longer than a week."

"Where does she keep them?"

"Oh, they stay around the yard, and when it's cold they crawl under the barn, or if they get a chance they go up in the haymow."

"No wonder," said mistress. "A cat, with her domestic instincts, in order to become attached to a place, must have a cozy, comfortable corner somewhere in the house that she can call her very own. It may be nothing more than a basket with a pad or a cushion in it, but it must be permanently located in a retired corner of a comfortable room. A cat thus provided will become attached to her own peculiar furniture, and even should the family remove to another place, if she is carefully transferred to the new home, and her corner is at once fitted up in a quiet room where she can be kept indoors for a few days, she will not go away.

"And while we are talking on this subject, I trust you will pardon me if I mention something that may seem very trivial to you, but which I con-

sider of great importance. A cat should have a name, because it adds to her dignity, and commands respect for her. Moreover it enhances her commercial value to be thus individualized, and lifted above the general mass of her kind."

"I am very glad to know all these things," said Mrs. Cotton. "You certainly have interested me in this subject as I never have been before in all my life."

Before Mrs. Cotton went away that afternoon she actually came over to the window-sill and gave Budge several gentle strokes. I suppose she chose Budge because he is the smallest.

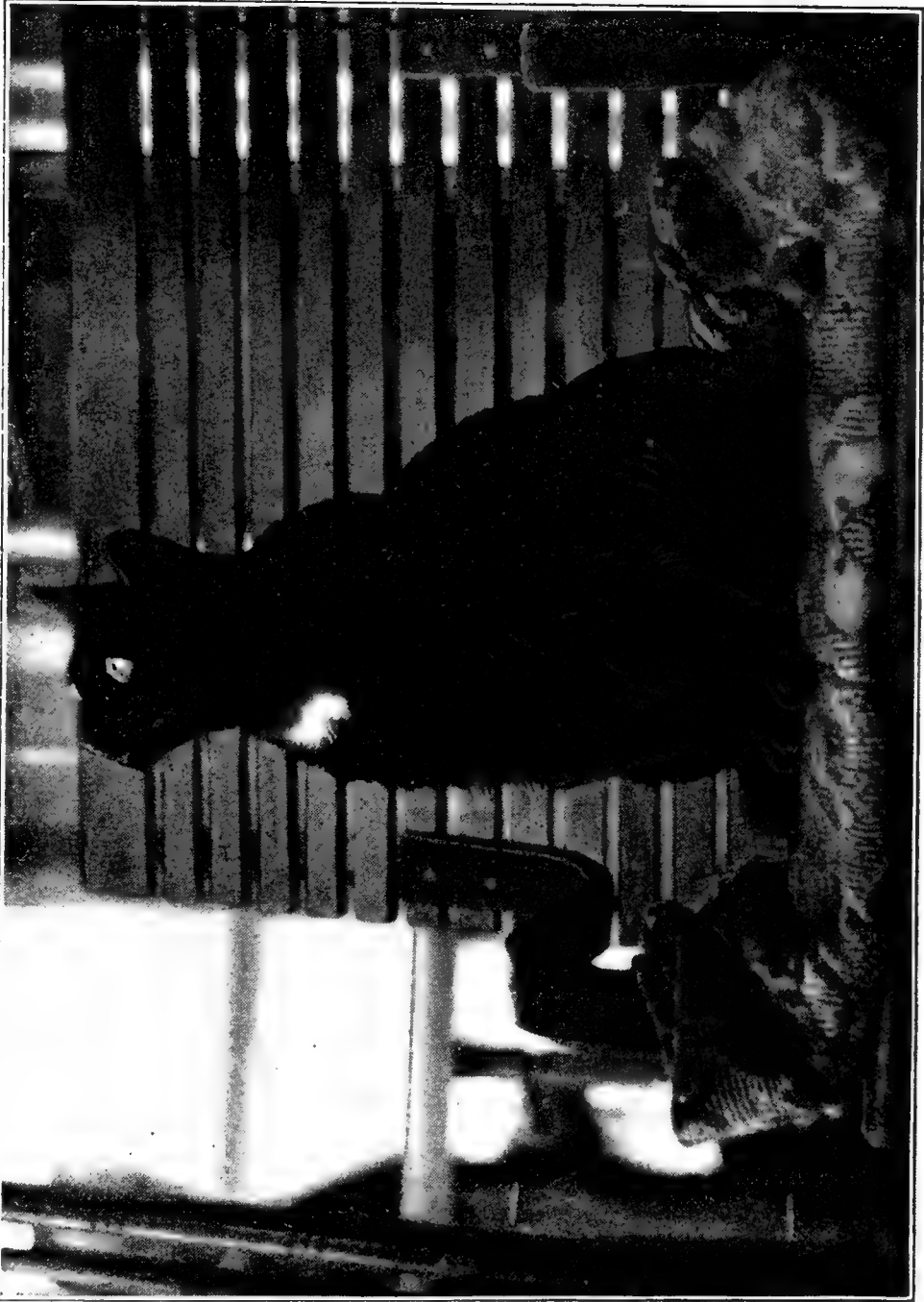
"How docile and confiding," said she; "they seem to know no fear at all; and such soft and glossy coats I never saw before."

"Their confiding and docile nature is due to kind treatment," said mistress, "and the soft and glossy coats are the result of good food, plenty of fresh water and clean pads."

As Mrs. Cotton took her departure, it seemed as though her face wore a far more kindly expression than it did when she came in.

Of course, I was delighted to hear all these good things, and especially that we cats are useful, and

serving our dear mistress such a good purpose.
May the time be near at hand when the sunshine
of love and good-will shall chase away every
shadow of hatred and cruelty!



JACK

XIII

JACK

JACK was a large black Manx cat that lived on Poplar Avenue, the friend of Betsy Whitefoot, as you will remember. His tail was only about an inch long, and his hind legs were higher than his front ones.

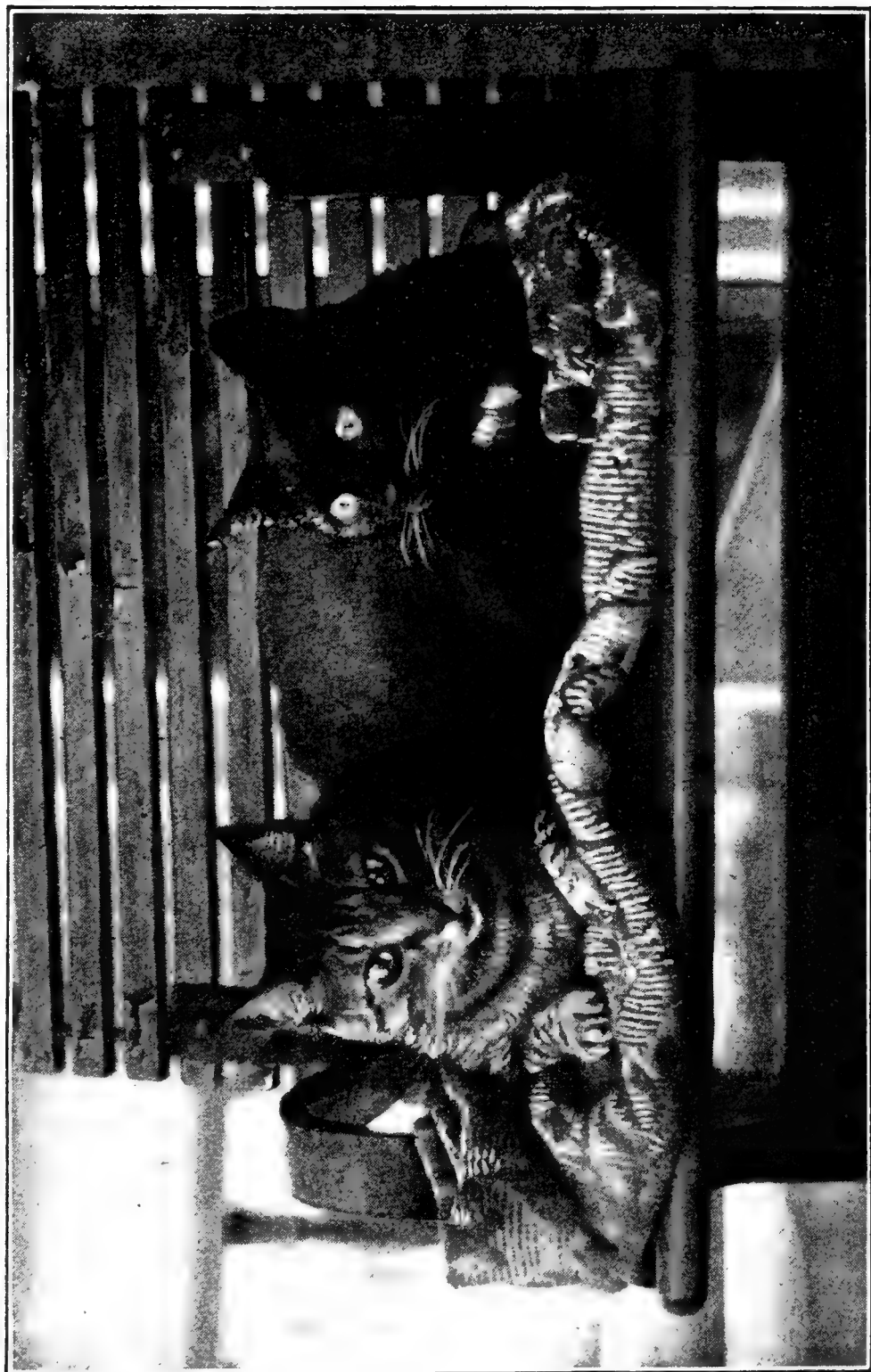
One day when Jack's mistress called at our house he followed her, and, having known him since the death of Betsy, I gave him a hearty welcome.

"Where did you get this beautiful cat?" said mistress, the moment she saw Jack.

"My husband brought him home one bitter cold day last winter," said Mrs. Vandervere. "He saw some boys chase him through an alley. The poor creature was so thoroughly frightened that for several days he stayed almost constantly behind the cook-stove, refusing to come out. We thought the boys had cut off his tail, but when I came to wash him I discovered that he never had one. When he recovered from his fright we found him

to be a very affectionate cat, and now we feel as though we could not do without him. Often when I am sewing he sits on my shoulders, and he used to have a fashion of pulling pins out of my waist with his teeth and drop them on the floor. But one day he pulled out a crooked pin and swallowed it, and by the way he acted we thought Jack would not be with us much longer. A raw egg, however, seemed to do him good, and in a few days he was all right again; but he has never pulled out any more pins."

Jack and I with Budge and Toddy had been lying in our sunny bay window, but while his mistress was still talking we two got up and went out into the yard. Jack went straight to Betsy's grave and sniffed around a while, then he mounted the fence and showed me the shortest cut over to his house, and he also invited me to visit his catnip bed, in which he turned several somersaults. Then he led the way through the cellar window up into the house, and in the library beside the fireplace was his basket, a beautiful willow trimmed with red ribbons, and a soft cushion inside. Jack told me that was his "corner." After a while we went outdoors again, and he showed me how far he could



"HE TOLD ME AN INTERESTING STORY"

jump. It was from the top of the porch railing to the ground; and when I am a full-grown cat I expect to be able to do the same.

After that day Jack came to see me quite often, and he seemed especially to enjoy our beautiful sunny porch, which, with its pads and cushions and baskets, looked very much like Miss Virgie's playhouse.

Whenever I visited Jack, we used to sit on a garden bench that stood in his yard, and upon which his mistress always left a blanket for Jack's special comfort.

Jack was a great fellow to talk about old times, and one day when we were enjoying a sun bath on the bench he told me a very interesting story. He said that his ancestors came from an island across the ocean, and that he hoped some day to visit that country.

I described to him my journey last summer on the steamboat, and our visit on the farm, and it made him even more anxious to go.

Continuing his story, Jack said that he was a lineal descendant of the famous cat that made a fortune for Richard Whittington, who was "Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

At this point I interrupted Jack to have him explain to me the meaning of "ancestor," and "lineal descendant." Jack was so friendly with me, I did not mind asking him, and he willingly explained it to me.

He said that the cat that lived with Richard Whittington very many years ago had a son named Tom; Tom had a son named Toby; Toby had a son named Jack, and so they kept on having sons till it finally came down to him, and that made Tom his ancestor, and him a lineal descendant.

Jack then told me of some of his experiences. He said that his ability to catch rats used to be quite as good as that of his early ancestor, but that since he lived in his present home, he had not much practice, there being no rats in the neighborhood, except an occasional one around the ash barrel.

I asked him where he learned the business, and he told me that he used to live in a down-town boarding-house, where he sometimes killed as many as twenty rats in one day. But the cook caught one alive one day, and tied a string around his neck with a little bell attached, and let him go back to his hole; and the ringing of the bell so frightened the other rats that they all went away. Said

Jack: "My occupation was gone, and as the boarding-house keeper had no further use for me, she got some boys to chase me away." And then he added with some bitterness: "That was the way she rewarded me for my services."

I told Jack that I thought the treatment he received was very cruel. Indeed, I think a dose of chloroform administered to a cat one has no further use for, is much more humane than chasing him away, especially in cold weather. Of course, I didn't tell Jack so; and indeed I am glad it was not done in his case. But not every cat is so fortunate as to be picked up by a kind-hearted person and taken to a good home.

Continuing our conversation I said to Jack: "Don't you think your present beautiful home and kind mistress came to you as a reward for your industry in the boarding-house?"

He said he had never thought of it in that light before, but that he believed it must be so, and that he would forgive his former mistress for her unkindness.

At this time Jack's mistress called him into the house, and I returned to my home, thankful that I had such a genial fellow as Jack for a neighbor.

XIV

CHRISTMAS

I SHALL never forget the delightful time we had on Christmas Day.

Imagine my surprise when on a beautiful winter morning we were decked out the first thing with bright new ribbons. I knew it was not Sunday, so I thought it must be Christmas, having heard Guy say that Christmas was just like Sunday.

After we had our ribbons tied, we were called into the library, and there on our bay-window seat was a beautiful lily plant with seven snow white bells on it, which filled the entire house with their fragrant odor. On the table stood a tree, like some I have seen in the country, and under the tree were three beautiful new pads, one orange, one blue and one pink, and a large willow basket with a soft cushion in it. Hanging on the branches of the tree, instead of apples or cherries as in grandpa's orchard, were rubber balls, spools, and white mus-

lin bags filled with popcorn. The spools had little tufts of bright colored worsted sticking out at each end, and they were suspended on narrow ribbon long enough to reach nearly to the table, which made it handy to play with them. The balls had something inside, which, when we squeezed them, would come out and tickle our noses, but we could never see the thing that came out. We used to try to catch it, but how could we catch a thing we couldn't see?

After we had admired the beautiful tree for a while, Guy took down a bag for each of us. The muslin of which the bags were made was so thin that you could see the popcorn that was inside. The bags were tied at each end with pretty colored ribbon, which made them look just like little white sausages; but how to get them open and get at the popcorn was what puzzled me. But cats know just as well as people, that "in union there is strength," so all three of us took hold of the same bag. It was tied with blue ribbon and belonged to Budge. For a while we played with the bag, each one pulling in a different direction, and in a few minutes the whole floor was littered over with popcorn. For a while we were very busy helping ourselves,

and I am sorry to say that each growled at the others while eating, for fear they would get the most: it tasted so good.

While we were busy eating the popcorn, Dennis came in, wearing a beautiful new silver collar with his name and address: "Dennis Hilton, 129 Poplar Avenue," inscribed upon it, and a yellow satin bow in the ring. Of course, we invited him to have some popcorn. But Dennis was more interested in our new pads and basket than in the popcorn, and after smelling of them all very cautiously, he stretched himself out on my pad at full length and took a nap. I was so glad he was too big for the basket.

I wondered all the morning why Jack didn't come over, but in the afternoon we met accidentally on the fence ledge, and he told me that they had also had a Christmas over at his place; and he invited me to go over with him.

He said that on the night before when he was out in his poplar tree, he saw an old gray-haired man with a long, white beard, and wearing a furry coat and cap, drive down our street in a chariot drawn by reindeer, and that the chariot was loaded with the most beautiful toys and bonbons, such as

children like, and that he stopped at every house in the neighborhood except Eddie's.

Said I: "May be that's Santa Claus, that we hear so much about; but they say he always travels in a sleigh."

Jack said he guessed not, unless there was snow on the ground.

By this time we had reached his yard, and he invited me in and showed me his presents. He had a beautiful new brass collar with "Jack Vandervere, 111 Poplar Avenue" inscribed upon it. He also had a box of sardines which tasted perfectly delicious.

Mistress sometimes gives us salmon and it is very good; but I like sardines better because they are whole, and it is such fun to toss them around and play "catch" with them. If they would only wiggle a little, it would be still more fun to play with them.

Jack had many other presents, but the one that interested me most of all was a little box that sings when you pull a string. His mistress pulled the string for me, and the very first song that came out was one I have heard mistress sing, about an Owl and a Pussy Cat that went to sea and got married.

Another song that came out of the box was "My Pussy has gone from her Basket." It seemed to be gotten up on purpose for pussies. Perhaps if I am a real good cat, the little old man will bring me a song box some time. Next Christmas eve I shall watch for him from my poplar tree.

While I was admiring Jack's presents and listening to the lovely music, in came Willie Cotton, carrying in his arms a beautiful jet black kitten with amber eyes and a white "breastpin." It had a yellow ribbon around its neck, to which was fastened a note, as follows

"LABRADOR, Dec. 25.

"DEAR WILLIE:

"This will introduce to you Nicodemus. I have sent him to you because you belong to the Band of Mercy, and want some animal to love and care for. Fix him a comfortable place in some room where he will be obliged to be neat and orderly in his habits. He will make you no trouble, if you will take him out into the yard every morning, noon and evening, and always take him to the same place.

"Your faithful friend,

"MRS. SANTA CLAUS."

As Nicodemus was a Manx cat, Jack treated him very kindly, and invited him to have some sardines

with us. While we were eating, the box played a song that I have often heard about some little fishes that asked their mother if they could go and play. I can't repeat the song but I will tell you what I remember of it. Their mother said no, but the little fishes went anyhow; and the result was that they got so far away from home they could not find their way back again. At last they were caught in a net with a lot of other fishes, and taken to the cannery.

“Perhaps these are the very ones,” said Jack, as he pointed to the box that was fast becoming empty. I don't know whether Jack's object was to save his few remaining sardines or not; but, anyway, I did not care for any more just then; and as the sun had gone down, I bade Jack and his guest a very good-evening.

And so ended our Christmas.

XV

OLD BLACKIE

I HAD often wondered how it happened that a busy woman like mistress was so much interested in cats, till one evening the mystery was cleared up. A lovely lady whom Guy called "Aunt Minnie" was staying with us at the time—and by the way we cats are very happy whenever she comes to visit us, because then somebody always sends such beautiful flowers.

I had climbed up into mistress' lap to listen to a story she was reading about some Cat Club. But as it was only about Angoras and Persian cats, and not a word about Maltese and tigers, it did not interest me very much, and I curled up and took a nap. When I awoke, mistress was talking, and the first I heard was :

"When I was a little girl in Switzerland, we had horses, cows, dogs, cats and rabbits, and I was very fond of them all. I suppose the reason I have become so fond of cats is because I have for many

years been deprived of the other pets, and for some time while boarding, I didn't even have a cat. But just before Guy was born we started housekeeping in a down-town cottage, and on the very first day an enormous black cat came to the kitchen door, pleading for admittance. Having found that there were mice and rats in the cellar, I gladly let him in and from that day I never saw a rat or a mouse in the house. We fixed him a comfortable corner in the basement, and named him 'Tom.' From the first he acted like one thoroughly familiar with the premises, and no wonder: I learned afterward from the neighbors that he had lived in that house for many years with successive tenants.

"But one morning I heard some very queer noises in the basement, and when I went down to see what it was, I found Tom lying in his basket with four of the tiniest kittens I had ever seen, and looking up at me so pleadingly, as if to say: 'You'll be good to them, won't you?'"

"We knew then that 'Tom' was not an appropriate name for our cat, for whoever heard of a mother cat named 'Tom'? So we told Guy's nurse to find a new name for her, and because she was so black, Emma named her 'Old Blackie.'"

“What has become of Old Blackie and her kittens?” said Aunt Minnie.

Mistress continued: “Blackie raised her family, two tigers and two Maltese; the Maltese were named ‘Jumbo’ and ‘Fritz,’ the tigers ‘Meow’ and ‘Peggy.’ Jumbo and Peggy were adopted by the doctor who attended Guy; Fritz was taken home by our milkman, and I kept Meow. But the following year Guy’s health was not good, and we went to my father’s to spend the summer on the farm. In the meantime some more kittens had come to Blackie, and I arranged with my neighbor’s little girl to take care of the whole family during my absence, and to find homes for the little ones, if she could. Meow we took with us, in a large bird cage covered with a cloth.”

As I listened to the story of Old Blackie, I was reminded of old Peter, a cat that was deserted by his people who left him in the cellar. He was nearly drowned when the landlord found him, and took him to his own beautiful home; and he named him Peter, because he had found him walking in the water.

Aunt Minnie had by this time become so in-

terested in mistress' story, that she asked her to also relate the history of Meow.

“That was my first experience traveling with a cat,” said mistress. “Emma took care of Meow, and I held the baby.

“On the farm Meow became very popular, and she and grandpa were the best of friends. I well remember how at meal-times she would always sit on the broad window-sill in the dining-room, and as soon as grandpa finished, and began to lean back in his big armchair, she would spring on his shoulder and caress him. Then he would prepare her a dainty dinner and carry it out to the kitchen with her perched on his shoulder. I also remember that when her first kittens came she was determined to put them into my bureau drawer. But I took her out into the kitchen and made her a nice soft bed in an old cheese box, where she raised her family and became a very good mother.”

“But where is Meow now?” said Aunt Minnie.

“When the summer was over and the time approached for our departure,” said mistress, “grandpa had become so attached to Meow, he invited her to stay with him; and as she had a family I was glad to let her remain.”

“And is she there yet?” asked Aunt Minnie.

“No,” said mistress. “She lived there seven years, and then grandpa went to live on another farm. On the day they moved he put her into a bag to take her to the new house; but, instead of putting her into a closed room until she recovered from the excitement caused by the removal, he opened the bag in the yard, and she ran away as fast as she could.

“Some months later grandpa learned that she had gone back to the old place; for on the morning after the new family moved in, they found her lying in her cheese box, very ill and unable to move, and on that same day she died. She had traveled three miles and crossed a wide creek in order to reach her old home.”

When I heard this story I remembered mistress' remark on that first morning, that I looked like “Meow,” and it dawned upon me why I was given that name. And having become acquainted with grandpa I was glad to be named after an animal that had given him so much pleasure, and I was more determined than ever to be a good and useful cat. That's why I never beg when I sit at the table, and very often when mistress has finished I

jump from my chair up to her shoulder and kiss her cheek. Sometimes I can hardly wait till she gets through.

But I am very sorry that Meow left grandpa in such a hasty manner, and no doubt the good old man thought she was a poor homeless cat until he heard of her death. I would not be afraid at any place to which Guy or mistress might take me, as long as they were with me.

Having heard the history of Meow, my namesake, Aunt Minnie wanted to know what had become of Old Blackie.

“Old Blackie,” said mistress, “came to a very sad end. During my absence I had my milkman leave milk for her every day, and my butcher brought her meat regularly; I also left a dozen cans of salmon so that Blackie and her kittens could have one every week. After we had been gone about two months, the little girl wrote that Blackie had died, and that she had found homes for all the kittens but one, which she would like to keep herself. Upon my return home I learned that Blackie’s death was due to gangrene poisoning, caused by eating salmon that had been left in the can after opening.”

“ This is a very sad ending to a most interesting story,” said Aunt Minnie; and I thought so too. I think we cats ought all to feel very grateful to Old Blackie, because it was she that got mistress interested in cats again, after she had been so long a time without any, and in this I am sure Blackie did all cats a great service.

XVI

MY GREAT SORROW

ONE evening when we cats had had our usual frolic in the library and bedtime was drawing near, I went to the door, as usual, and gave mistress the look which told her that I wanted to go out. She opened the door in the kindest manner, and as it was a beautiful moonlight night I mounted the fence and went over to Jack's house, for I had something very important to tell him. I had heard Guy tell mistress that very evening not to let us stay out much evenings, because he had been told that it was the fashion in schools and colleges to dissect cats, so they can see how we are put together. He said that one of the boys had told him that they just go out nights and get any cats they can catch, or that will come to them; and that the majority of cats gathered up in this way are somebody's pets because they are so much more tame than others, and more easily caught.

When I told this to Jack, it made him very in-

dignant. "The idea of such an outrage perpetrated on us poor unsuspecting cats," said he. "Where is the Humane Agent? Why don't he arrest the thieves?"

I told Jack that from what I had heard, one might steal all the cats in Christendom, except the highly favored Angoras and Persians, and he could not be arrested, because the law does not protect cats.

When Jack heard this he could hardly contain himself for anger, and he invited me to go over to his yard and sit on the bench with him, where we could talk the matter over quietly. But just then his mistress called him, and being a very obedient cat, he went right into the house. I went over toward my poplar tree, and as I neared my house I heard my mistress calling me also. But it was such a pleasant evening, the moonlight was so beautiful and the stars shone so brightly, I really could not bear the thought of going in. Even the whetting of the carving knife did not tempt me, and I did not heed my dear mistress' call. It seems as though I could hear even now that tender voice falling softly on the night air: "Come, Meow, come," before she finally closed the door.

How dearly I paid for my disobedience, I will tell you.

After staying up in the poplar tree awhile, I concluded to go in, but the doors were all shut, and the house was dark. I called at the kitchen door, but nobody heard me, so I crawled into a soap box in which I found an old blanket, put there for me, no doubt, by my thoughtful mistress. But for some reason or other I could not get that dreadful dissecting story off my mind, and while I sat in my box thinking about it, I saw an old black cat,—not Jack—come along on the fence ledge and descend into my yard. I jumped up immediately and asked him what business he had prowling around in my yard at that time of night.

“I am looking for you,” said he, “and I want you to go with me to visit a friend down by the railroad.”

On the whole the cat had quite a distinguished appearance, and I must say I felt somewhat flattered by his attention. Besides that, he was so polite and kind, and I so lonely. Well, to make a long story short, I accepted his invitation.

My companion said we must hurry, as it was a long distance, so we started on our journey at once. We walked to the end of Poplar Avenue, farther

than I had walked before in all my life; then we crossed several railroad tracks, and for a short distance we went on the top of a fence inclosing a beautiful yard with trees and shrubs and flowers. Quite a distance from the fence stood a large white mansion, and there my companion alighted and bade me follow him.

“Here is where my friend lives,” said he, “and his name is Cæsar Augustus Napoleon, so you can imagine he is no ordinary cat.”

I felt very proud to think I should soon meet such a distinguished cat, but we had not gone many steps when a very loud bark frightened me, and I saw an enormous bulldog come toward us. I retraced my steps to the fence, and ran away as fast as I could. But I must have gone the wrong way, for I could not find the railroad tracks which we had crossed.

When I had gone far enough to be out of the dog's reach, I rested for a few minutes, and be-thought me what to do. A short distance from the fence was another beautiful mansion, and it looked so inviting in the clear moonlight, I went over on the porch and sat upon the door-mat. There was no dog around to frighten me, so I rested quietly, and

was just about ready to doze off into a nap when my black companion came along, limping on three legs, his head bleeding, and one of his eyes completely closed. He had traced me to the porch, and came up and sat down beside me, but said nothing—goodness me, what could he say?—and as I was very tired, I soon fell asleep. When I awoke he had gone, and I felt I was very fortunate to be rid of him, for was he not the cause of all my trouble?

Sad and strange thoughts passed through my mind on that unhappy morning, and I could only hope that the “Kind Providence” that I had so often heard mistress tell about, would be good enough to help even a poor little homeless cat like me.

I stayed on the porch all night, lonely, and shivering with cold. I, who had always been used to sleeping on a nice soft pad or cushion even in the house, there on that cold night had to sleep outdoors on a straw mat. But we must expect sorrow and shame for disobedience. After all my greatest sorrow was caused by the thought of how dreadfully my dear mistress would feel in the morning at not finding me.

If only the dear children who read this story would take warning from my sad experience, and never disobey their parents, I could feel that some good had come out of my great sorrow.

XVII

THE KIND PROVIDENCE

WHEN it was morning, a man came out of the stable door back of the mansion and began sweeping the walks. I started to go away when he came near me, but he called to me in such a kind way, I lingered, though half afraid, for a few moments.

Instead of sweeping the porch where I was sitting, he passed by, only sweeping the steps, talking gently to me as he went along. I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was a kind-hearted man, and when he returned, I followed him into the stable.

There I saw four beautiful horses, each in a clean large stall, and they all looked so happy and self-respecting. One was much darker than the others, and I wondered whether possibly he was the "Black Beauty" I had heard so much about. The man then began to brush and comb the horses, talking to them, and whistling and singing part of the time. When he had finished, he gave them

their breakfast of oats and hay. During all this time I sat contentedly in a corner under the manger, quite forgetful of the unhappy night I had passed.

After a while a boy, about Guy's age and with just such blond, bushy hair, came into the stable, followed by an enormous white and yellow St. Bernard. I was terribly frightened when I saw the dog, but I didn't let him know it; it isn't a cat's way, you know. In a jiffy my back went up, and my tail took on the shape of a jug handle. But the dog didn't pay a bit of attention to me. He lay down calmly and quietly, and in such a dignified manner. I said to myself "here is a real gentleman." Gradually I moved a little closer to him, and lay down also. The boy then came over to where I was and said: "Why, kitty, what is your name?"

I said "Meow."

But he evidently did not understand me, for after a while he said, "Come, Tommie, and see my sister," and he took me up in his arms and carried me into the house.

There I found a beautiful young lady by the name of Miss Dorothy. She had laughing blue

eyes and long golden hair, which hung down her back in a graceful braid, tied at the end with a blue ribbon. There was also Mr. Banks her father, and Miss Beggs, the housekeeper. Arthur—that's the boy's name—set me down by the side of his sister, and told her where he had found me.

I am very thankful to the kind Providence that put it into his heart to love animals and to show kindness to a poor little homeless cat like me.

Miss Dorothy took me to the bathroom, where she sponged off my coat and wiped it dry with a towel. Then she gave me a good combing, and tied a fresh ribbon around my neck, for the one that I had on was all soiled and ragged. She did not like the name Tommie, so she called me Tootsie, a name which I trust I never dishonored, during the short time I bore it. Miss Dorothy also put a soft silken cushion at the foot of her bed, and that was my "corner" during all the time I stayed with her.

But my new ribbon came very near causing me serious trouble. Miss Dorothy had tied it so loosely that it was quite uncomfortable. I tried to slip it over my head, and in so doing my lower jaw became caught in it, and I was unable to close my mouth. The worst of it all was, my jaw was caught

in such a way that I could not make an outcry or give any alarm. I just tumbled over and over myself in my frantic effort to get the troublesome thing off, and Miss Dorothy looked on, evidently thinking I was playing. Finally I just sank down, exhausted, and then she noticed my trouble, and with the scissors quickly cut the ribbon. After that she tied it more carefully.

I happened to be in the dining-room one day when they were arranging the dinner-table, and as four chairs were placed when there were but three persons to sit down, I concluded that the fourth was for me; so I jumped up next to Miss Dorothy. She seemed very much pleased, and welcomed me with a pat on my back; but Mr. Banks frowned, and said I must not be allowed such liberties. At this Miss Beggs offered to take me out of the room, but Miss Dorothy begged so hard for me to be allowed to stay, Mr. Banks finally consented, saying that if I continued to behave as well as I had so far, he would not object.

“She is no common cat,” said Arthur; “she acts as if she were accustomed to sitting at the table.”

Miss Dorothy gave me a loving look and said, “You are a treasure, Toots.”

Before the meal was quite finished, "Dr. Fogg" was announced, and Miss Dorothy arose from the table saying that she was expecting him for dinner.

Miss Beggs then took me up-stairs, but after dinner I went down to the library, and spent a very pleasant evening with Dr. Fogg and Miss Dorothy.

I had given myself such a vigorous scrubbing while up-stairs that my fur was stuck together in little tufts all over my body; but Miss Dorothy picked me up and smoothed it all out, and put a pretty fresh ribbon around my neck.

Then Dr. Fogg took me for a while, and after he had looked me all over he said I was a good healthy cat.

"How can you tell?" said Miss Dorothy.

"Because her nostrils are cold and moist," was the reply. "A sick or famished cat has dry, hot nostrils. This cat also has many good points," added the doctor: "short nose, short thick tail, short round ears and soft silken fur."

"You are a lover of cats, I take it, or you would not be so well versed in cat-lore," said Miss Dorothy, with evident pleasure.

"You would think so if you could see my

Remus," replied the doctor, the while gently stroking my back. "I wouldn't part with him for a fortune. Better than any medicine to a restless overworked mind is a sleek healthy cat for a bed-fellow, for the electricity with which his fur is charged will induce sleep when all other means fail."

"How perfectly wonderful," said Miss Dorothy. "I must get one for papa. Where did you get Remus?"

"Remus," said the doctor, "was one of a pair of black kittens that belonged to old Black Betty at the college. Betty had the mange several times, but the students always cured her by rubbing her sores with a mixture of lard and sulphur, which she would immediately lick off. During her last attack, however, she seemed to have a presentiment that her hour had come. One morning, while my father was lecturing to the students, Betty brought in one of her kittens, laid it at his feet, looked up into his face and mewed. Then she went and fetched the other, and repeated the same action, after which she returned to her basket, and ten minutes later the janitor found her dead. Father regarded those kittens as a sacred trust, and

insisted that both be kept in our house ; so sister appropriated one, and I the other ; and this is how I came into possession of Remus."

When the doctor began to talk about the things that they did at the college, I expected to hear quite a different story. I am glad now to know that they do some other things for cats in colleges besides dissecting them.

"By the way," said Miss Dorothy, "I read in to-day's paper that in some place where diptheria is raging, all the cats have been killed because it is supposed that they spread the disease. And in another place where the smallpox has broken out, the health officer proposes that it is necessary to kill off all the stray and homeless cats and dogs before the disease can be stamped out. What do you think of that?"

"Nonsense," said the doctor. "Everything that lives, from a fly to an elephant, is liable to carry germs, and one of the most prolific conductors of germs is the rat ; so you see that even the persecuted alley cat has a reason for her existence. Indeed, the congested districts of a large city would be uninhabitable, and we would see the scenes of the famous mouse tower enacted over again, were it

not for the services of this much maligned and misunderstood creature."

"It seems to me," said Miss Dorothy, "if there were anything in this theory about cats and dogs spreading smallpox, for instance, they would themselves be subject to the disease. But whoever heard of a cat or dog dying of smallpox, or even being afflicted with it?"

"I am sure I never did," replied the doctor.

As for me, the things to which I had been listening filled me with astonishment and indignation, and I retired to my corner on Miss Dorothy's bed to think matters over. Would that there were more such kind-hearted people to speak for the defenseless as Miss Dorothy and the doctor.

But I must return to my story. Bernie, the dog, was a noble, dignified animal, and not the least bit jealous of the attention that was being paid to me. Often when I was out in the yard, he would invite me to lie beside him in the sunshine, and when I did so he would put his head down close to mine and look into my eyes, just as if he wanted to tell me something real nice. His coat was always clean and fluffy, because he had a bath regularly once a week, and his "corner" was in the rear hall,

where he had a white fur rug for his resting-place. But he spent most of his time outside with Arthur and the coachman.

During the first day or two at Miss Dorothy's I really suffered hunger, although I was in the midst of plenty, for the cook never thought of giving me a morsel of anything. She would throw the nicest tidbits of meat and fish that came from the table right into the garbage can, and let me hunt for food the best way I could. Of course, I was not used to eating out of garbage cans, and really, I'd starve rather than do such a vulgar thing. After a few days of such scanty fare as I could get by catching flies and grasshoppers, I jumped up on the pantry table one morning to see if I couldn't find something more substantial, and what should I see there but a great big fish. I grabbed him by the tail and jumped down, but the fish got to the floor before I did. I then took hold of him and pulled him over to the cellar door, and was just starting down the stairs to take him to a quiet place, where I could have my feast undisturbed, when the cook came in.

“Faith an' I knowed all the time ye was a thief,” said she, jerking my treasure away from me; and

then she called Miss Dorothy in to see what her new pet was up to. Miss Dorothy took me up in her arms, but did not say one unpleasant word to me. She knew that no respectable cat would steal, unless actually driven to it. She asked the cook when I was last fed, and upon learning that no one had paid any attention to me in the way of food, she told Miss Beggs to see that I was properly cared for at every meal thereafter, and after that I fared better. Miss Beggs would gather up the choicest little remnants of meat or chicken or fish on the plates, and mix them with a little mashed potato or rice in such a way that it made the daintiest meal for me.

So you see the kind Providence did take care of me, even though I am only a cat.

XVIII

A WELCOME VISITOR

MISS DOROTHY had many lovely neighbors, but the one I liked best of all was Mrs. Stevens. One day when the two ladies were visiting, I happened to be in the room, and Miss Dorothy told Mrs. Stevens how I had come to her a homeless little stranger. Mrs. Stevens said that her children had been wanting a little kitty for a long time, but that she had never allowed them to have one till Mrs. Cotton persuaded her to do so.

When I heard the name of Mrs. Cotton, I was so overjoyed, I jumped on the floor and turned several somersaults, and Mrs. Stevens laughed heartily at my antics.

One day while napping on my cushion, I was awakened by a familiar voice in Miss Dorothy's room. It was a lady, and she asked Miss Dorothy if she could take charge of the Band of Mercy for a while, as Miss Wallace the leader, had been called away.

Of course having heard the story of Beautiful Joe, I know all about the Band of Mercy. It is a place where little boys and girls sing and speak lovely pieces. Here is one I heard Guy read to his mother from "Dumb Animals:"

Three little kittens, so downy and soft,
 Were cuddled up by the fire,
 And two little children were sleeping aloft,
 As cozy as heart could desire;
 Dreaming of something ever so nice,
 Dolls and sugar-plums, rats and mice.

The night wore on, and the mistress said,
 "I'm sleepy, I must confess,
 And as kitties and babies are safe in bed,
 I'll go to bed too, I guess."
 She went up-stairs, just a story higher,
 While the kittens slept by the kitchen fire.

"What noise can that be?" the mistress said.
 "Meow! meow!" "I'm afraid
 A poor kitty-cat's fallen out of bed!
 The nice little nest I made!"
 "Meow! meow!" "Dear me! dear me!
 I wonder what can the matter be!"

The mistress paused on an upper stair,
 For, what did she see below?
 But three little kittens, with frightened air,
 Standing up in a row!
 With six little paws on the step above,
 And no mother cat to caress or love!

Through the kitchen door came a cloud of smoke !
The mistress, in great alarm,
To a sense of danger straightway awoke :
Her babies might come to harm.
On the kitchen hearth, to her great amaze,
Was a basket of shavings beginning to blaze.

The three little kittens were hugged and kissed,
And promised many a mouse ;
While their names were put upon honor's list,
For hadn't they saved a house ?
And two little children were gathered tight
To their mother's heart ere she slept that night.

The mention of the Band of Mercy brought to my mind little Willie Cotton, and instantly it dawned upon me that the strange lady was Willie's mother. Mrs. Cotton carried a bunch of delicious sweet violets, as usual.

"I will be most happy to do anything I can for Miss Wallace," said Miss Dorothy, "and if you think I am able to lead the Band, it will give me great pleasure to do so."

While Miss Dorothy was speaking I got up from my cushion, and jumped into her lap, but Mrs. Cotton did not seem to notice me at all; she was so interested in the Band of Mercy. Then, although I knew it was very rude to do so, I jumped over on Mrs. Cotton's lap. I felt that I must in

some way attract her attention. Mrs. Cotton petted me a little, so I climbed up to her face and kissed her nose. At this Mrs. Cotton seemed to take alarm. Perhaps she thought I was on the way up to her hat again; but I wasn't, for the birdies had all flown away.

“What an affectionate little creature,” said she, holding me firmly in her lap. “Where did you get this cat?”

“She came to us a couple of weeks ago,” said Miss Dorothy, “and made herself so thoroughly agreeable that I have had her as my constant companion ever since.”

Mrs. Cotton looked at me more closely and said, “She looks like a cat that my neighbor, Mrs. Paxton has lost, and she has been very unhappy over it; only a few days ago she said she still hoped to find her again.”

Miss Dorothy looked very sad. “Is there any way by which you could prove that this is Mrs. Paxton's cat?” said she, “for, if she is, I want to return her.”

Mrs. Cotton put her hand to her forehead evidently trying to recall my name, when I cried out “meow.”

“Oh, ‘Meow’! that was the cat’s name. Meow! Meow!”

At the sound of my name I could hardly contain myself. I kissed Mrs. Cotton’s cheek many times, and then, seeing Miss Dorothy looked sad, I went over and kissed her too.

“I believe you are right,” said Miss Dorothy, “and if Tootsie belongs to Mrs. Paxton, she shall have her back. I named her after Miss Willard’s cat because she seemed so well-bred and so dignified.”

“Mrs. Paxton will be delighted to see you,” said Mrs. Cotton, “for I feel quite sure that this is her cat.”

“We shall all be very sorry to give her up,” said Miss Dorothy, as she accompanied Mrs. Cotton to the door.

At the dinner-table Miss Dorothy told her father and Arthur what Mrs. Cotton had told her.

“There is only one thing to do, daughter,” said Mr. Banks.

“Yes,” said Miss Dorothy, “I am going to take her over to-day.”

Then I knew that that would be my last day at Miss Dorothy’s, and wishing to give my dear mis-

tress all the pleasure I could, I immediately set to washing myself and smoothing my fur.

To be sure I felt sad to leave my new friends who had been so very kind to me, still I was overjoyed thinking of the happiness it would give my mistress to find me again.

XIX

A JOYFUL REUNION

SOON after dinner that same day the carriage drove up to the side entrance, and Miss Dorothy wrapped me in a small blanket and took me away with her.

She held me on her lap all the way and said loving words, telling me how she would miss me if I belonged to the other lady. My head was out of the blanket so I could see where we were going.

After a short drive on a beautiful avenue we turned down a quiet side street, and there, to my great delight, I saw the long row of poplar trees so dear to me. They seemed like so many old friends, standing there to welcome me home. Another familiar sight was Eddie riding his velocipede, and when next I saw Jack seated on his window-sill, I knew that we must be getting close to Number 127.

Presently the carriage stopped and Miss Dorothy alighted, leaving me on the seat in care of the good, kind coachman. In a few minutes, which seemed

hours to me, Miss Dorothy returned to fetch me into the house. My dear mistress met me at the door, and the moment she saw me she said, "Meow, why did you leave me?" at the same time taking me out of Miss Dorothy's arms. I climbed up to her face and covered her cheeks with kisses.

Poor Miss Dorothy watched me very closely, but after such a greeting she could have no doubt that I was the lost Meow.

"I am sorry to take her from you," said mistress, "for you must have become attached to her if you have had her all this time."

"Yes," said Miss Dorothy, "she has been a most agreeable companion; I shall miss her sorely."

Then the ladies chatted for a few minutes, Miss Dorothy telling mistress how I was found by her coachman, and mistress telling her when I disappeared; and as the two dates were only one day apart, both rejoiced that I had been fortunate enough to find a new home so soon.

"I will see that you get one in her place," said mistress, trying to console poor Miss Dorothy, as she arose to go; and I went on the window-sill to see the carriage roll away.

The next thing I did was to look around for my

companions, Budge and Toddy. On entering the library I saw upon the table a vase of beautiful flowers, and Budge and Toddy up there walking around the vase, admiring the flowers, and smelling them. I went up to them but they did not seem to remember me, and acted rather uppish—I mean with their backs. But after a while they recognized me as their former playmate, and their backs went down. Of course they wanted to know all about my absence, and they told me of all the searching that had been done, and how mistress would go out in the yard day after day and call for me.

“Even Dennis was hunting for you all over the neighborhood,” said Toddy.

“And Jack came over every day,” said Budge, “to inquire whether you had returned.”

When it got to be time for the children to come from school, I went to the window to watch for Guy. But after all the children had passed by, and he did not come, I went to his room.

There I found a strange lady dressed in blue, and wearing a white cap and apron, and somebody was lying in Guy’s bed. I jumped up on the bed, as I had often done, and saw that it was Guy; but he looked so pale and thin, and to my great surprise,

he took no notice of me. The house was very still, and everybody spoke in a whisper; I could not understand what it all meant.

During the afternoon a very tall gentleman called, with a hand bag. They called him "Doctor." I heard him talk to the strange lady about "temperature" and "quinine" and "hot compress" and other things that I had never heard of before.

At supper-time Dennis came in and I went up to him and looked into his eyes. He put his nose down close to mine and gave a soft low growl; perhaps he was scolding me for having stayed away so long. Early the next morning I scampered over to Jack's house. I found him seated on the ledge of the fence, intently watching the ash box, but as soon as he saw me he came to meet me.

"Where have you been?" said he, joyfully, as he rubbed his side up against me in the most friendly fashion. "I never expected to see you again, for I was afraid some of those dreadful college boys had got hold of you."

At this moment Jack's mistress came out into the yard, and when she saw me she too seemed de-

lighted, and to fitly celebrate my return, she brought out the song box and made it play "The Cat Came Back."

Of course, I had to give Jack an account of how I happened to disappear so suddenly, and when I told him about my black companion and that woe-ful night he expressed great surprise.

"That explains Nig's absence," said he. "His people, the Mortons, have missed him for several weeks. I don't blame him for leaving, because they made him stay outdoors on the coldest nights; and they gave him his food in an old tin pan big enough to water a horse with; and his usual fare was plain boiled potatoes, or oat meal mush."

I told Jack the condition Nig was in when I last saw him, but he said that was nothing unusual for Nig, and that he had often seen him with both eyes closed after a night's outing.

It was many weeks before Guy went to school again, and as soon as he was able to be up, the nurse permitted me to stay in his room all the time; so I spent many pleasant days with him. He told me about a big Maltese cat that came to the house just before he was taken ill, and how

they took her in and fed her as long as she stayed, because they wanted to do by her as they hoped some one was doing by me. I hope the kind Providence helped her to find her home again.

As soon as Guy was strong enough, the nurse taught him how to knit, and he was trying to make a pair of slippers to surprise his mother on her birthday. Oh! the fun I used to have playing with that ball of yarn. Often when it was wound around me, Guy would have to straighten it out before he could go on with his knitting. But once it came near costing me my life. The nurse was out on an errand at the time and Guy had dozed off to sleep, so I concluded to go down-stairs and get a little fresh air. But when I had gone half-way down the stairs something began pulling me back. Harder and harder I jerked, and harder and harder it pulled, till it finally broke and I got away. The yarn was wound around my neck so many times, it seemed like a rope, and I was gasping for breath at the foot of the stairs, when the nurse came in. She quickly cut it with the scissors, or I fear I should never have lived to tell the story of my happy home-coming.

XX

A NEW HOME

As soon as Guy was well again, he and mistress began to pack boxes and trunks, as if getting ready for another journey; and sure enough, one pleasant day as I sat on the window-sill, a big moving van drove up in front of our house.

As soon as mistress saw it she took us cats up to the attic, where we stayed the rest of the day. We looked out of the window, and saw one thing after another carried out of the house, and really we wondered with some misgivings as to what was happening to our dear home; even our basket had been put into the wagon. As we sat thinking these sad thoughts, and wondering what was going to be done with us, Guy came in with a big covered willow basket. He placed us inside of it, closed the cover, fastened it, and took us downstairs and handed us to the driver. Then he too mounted the wagon, seating himself in front with the driver. I was so glad to see him go with us,

and he kept our basket close by his side so that I could see him through the cracks in the basket, and could hear his voice. The rumbling of the wheels was not very pleasant to listen to, and Budge and Toddy were terribly frightened; you see they had never traveled, as I had, and didn't know what it all meant.

But our journey was very short. We stopped in front of a little white house with vine-covered verandas, where Guy jumped down and took us in, and mistress was there to welcome us. She took us at once up to the attic, and when we emerged from the basket, what should we find but our pads spread out in the sun with a saucer of milk by the side of them. There we stayed until morning, but we did not sleep very much; why? There were too many cozy nooks and corners to explore, and besides that, Toddy said he saw a mouse poke her head above a little hole, and we all watched the hole with him. But I am half afraid the mouse must have seen us, for she took care not to return.

In the morning Guy called us down-stairs and showed us all around the premises, and we were delighted to find such a large green yard with shrubs and trees. In front of the house were three

big maples, where we could climb up in case of danger from big dogs.

When we entered the house, we found our dear basket and cushions in a cozy corner of the library, and it just seemed as though 127 Poplar Avenue had been carried down bodily in the moving van. Off mistress' room was a delightful veranda and it was just the nicest place for us cats, because it used to make the dogs so furious to see us where they could not chase us. Mistress put one of our pads on the veranda, and in very warm weather we stayed out there all night. Budge used to go to sleep on the railing, and it was a common thing to hear his cry down below in the early morning. But the tumble didn't seem to do him any harm.

On the very next day after we had moved, I was sitting on the window-sill in Guy's room, looking down into the yard. On top of the board fence separating our yard from our neighbor's was a big yellow cat, and below on the lawn stood a small white and yellow dog whom they called "Jip."

"Those are some of our new neighbors," said mistress, "and we will see if we can get on good terms with them."

With that she raised the window, and threw out

some raw beef. The cat jumped off the fence, and she and the dog both ran for the meat. Mistress threw down several more pieces, and when it ceased to come dropping down, both looked up very wistfully.

About this time another cat appeared, a weak, sickly little creature, looking timorous, and very unhappy. I felt sure that mistress' heart would be touched at sight of her. The cat and dog had eaten all the meat, so mistress gave some to Guy to take to the little kitty. But she was afraid of him and would not come near, although she seemed very hungry. So Guy took a piece of the meat and threw it to the kitty, at a little distance, and she devoured it most greedily. Then he threw another piece not quite so far, and she came and got that. By throwing each piece a shorter distance, the kitty at last came close enough to Guy to take it out of his hand.

While Guy was feeding the kitty he inquired of a little boy in the next yard if he knew to whom the dog and cats belonged.

"The yellow ones belong to us," said the boy, "and the little kitty has no home at all; she belonged to the people that moved away."



THE TWO WERE HOLDING A FRIENDLY TALK IN THE GARDEN

At this mistress went quickly down the stairs, and when I next saw her, she had captured the timorous creature, and the two were holding a friendly chat in the garden. After that Guy made the little waif a comfortable bed in the basement, and mistress gave her the name of "Daisy," while Guy named the yellow cat "Buttercup."

Maple Road down our way was richly blessed with children in those days, so much so that the boys called it "Youngsters' Boulevard." And they were all such dear children.

On our right was Charlie Watt, and on our left were the Moody children, Marie, Anita, Madeline and Charlie. On the opposite side of the street were Florence and Lee Harrison, and a little way down the street were our friends Don and Winifred, whose pictures we had often seen above the bookcase.

Often when mistress went over to Winifred's house, Toddy and I followed her, and we used to play with Winifred and Katy—her dolly. Budge is too bashful to go out in company, so he usually stayed under the porch till we returned. I guess this is why Guy called him the "Home Guard."

Very often Winifred came to visit us. But she

never ran after us nor mauled us around as children are so apt to do. She would sit down on our cushion and wait till we went and sat by her side. This is why we all like her so well. If all children would do this, it would be much more pleasant for us to live with them.

I cannot tell you how much I would like to see Jack and Dennis, but since I have found so many lovely friends in our new home, I don't miss them as much as I did at first.

XXI

OUR WINGED FRIENDS

WE soon discovered that cats and dogs were not our only new neighbors on Maple Road, for one morning early we noticed a pair of robins flitting around the upper piazza. It was plain that they had come to stay for a while at least, for they were building a nest among the vines, and they had it nearly completed. The nest was about half-way between the two posts. If it had only been at the post, we cats could have seen what was inside of it.

Two little red-breasted robins were flying back and forth, fetching all sorts of things in their beaks; straw and strings and moss and grass, which they twined around in the most curious fashion. One would step inside and pat it down with his breast, while the other went after more stuff. At one time one of them brought a black rag, which they both looked at, and chattered over a great deal, but evidently concluded not to use for they dropped it on the ground. Then, in her endeavor to help the

robins mistress carried out a loose wad of cut worsted and placed it near the nest, but they did not make use of that either. Evidently they knew what they needed better than anybody else, in the building of their little home.

A day or two after the nest was finished, Guy stepped on a chair and looked inside, and found one little blue egg in it. After this mistress and Guy were very careful not to go on the piazza while the robins were in the nest, for fear they would be frightened, and would desert their eggs.

About three days later Guy looked again into the nest, and saw two eggs in it; and a week later when he looked again, there were four.

After the four eggs were laid, one of the robins stayed on the nest nearly all the time, the other one coming many times during the day, always bringing his mate something to eat. Mistress named them Robert and Rena.

We cats wanted to go out on the piazza the worst way during those days, but the door was always shut.

Sometimes when both robins were away, mistress or Guy would go on the piazza and scatter bread

crumbs, but the naughty little sparrows would come and take them away from the robins.

It was very hard for me to be a good cat in those days, especially when mistress would be standing inside the screen door, and Robert on the flower box answering her call. She would say "Pretty Robbie" and he would say, "Take care"—I suppose he meant by that she should take care not to let any harm come to his little mate. But just as soon as mistress opened the door, he would fly on the neighboring roof and scold very hard till she shut the door again.

Sometimes when I sat on the window-sill behind the glass pane, Robert would come just as close to me as he could, talking bird-talk to me. I think he said: "You can't catch me," for he seemed to think the screen or the window-pane made the porch railing a very safe place for him.

Robert and Rena seemed to have it all understood between them how their housekeeping was to be managed. Robert continued very faithfully to bring food to Rena, and occasionally she would fly out for a little exercise, Robert staying in the nest till she returned.

After a time we began to hear very queer sounds

coming from the piazza, and a great commotion seemed to be going on in the little nest. Tiny beaks could be seen, reaching above the edge, and Papa Robert seemed to be busier than ever. He would bring so much food at a time that the worms and insects could be seen dangling on each side of his beak. Sometimes he gave it to Rena, and she would chew it up and drop a portion into each little beak while he went off for more; and sometimes he would feed the little ones himself.

They say that accidents happen even in the best regulated households, so it's not surprising that they came near having one in Robert's family. I was sitting on the window-sill, and Rena was standing on the flower box chatting with mistress who stood just inside the door. The screen door happened to be unfastened and Toddy forced it open without mistress noticing it. So swiftly did he dart upon the flower box, that he nearly toppled over, and poor Rena just barely escaped his claws.

As soon as Rena reached a safe distance in the maple tree, she turned to Toddy and gave him a dreadful scolding. "You ugly cat," said she, "aren't you ashamed to think of robbing my poor little babies of their mother? You are more cruel

than the horrid huntermen who shoot poor birds with their guns; because they wouldn't think of coming in babytime." Toddy was evidently very much ashamed, for he sneaked into the house and went straight to his basket, and didn't show his face again that day.

If I had had Toddy's chance of getting out onto the porch, I should have done quite differently. I would have climbed up on the wire netting and the vines to the nest where the little birdies were, because they couldn't fly away. Oh, what a feast that would have been—four birds, one after the other. It sets my teeth on edge to think of it.

One afternoon, when both the robins happened to be away, mistress went on the piazza to await their return.

Rena came first, and perched on the neighboring housetop, chatting with mistress, although I think it sounded more as if she were scolding. Gradually she came nearer the piazza, and finally perched on the vines opposite the nest. But although her poor little babies cried most piteously, she would not go near them. But when mistress went into the house, hardly had she shut the door, when Rena flew to the nest and began feeding her babies.

That evening a gentleman called upon Aunt Minnie, who was visiting us, and Mistress told him about the queer conduct of Rena.

“That’s easily explained,” said the gentleman: “Robins are noted for concealing their young, although they will build their nests in the most frequented places. If you will take notice after the young are hatched, there will not be a sign of the shells lying around, neither will you find any in the nest after they leave, for they carry them all away.”

“Do you think they will come again next year?” inquired mistress.

“They may if left to themselves, and their nest not tampered with in the meantime,” said the gentleman.

It was not many days before it became evident that the birdies were outgrowing their little home. Before their wings were well covered with feathers, they could be seen stretching them at full length, and fluttering over the nest, and one day when both Robert and Rena were out, Guy teased his mother to let him look into the nest. Mistress consented, so he took a chair out unto the piazza; but unfortunately the screen door slipped from his grasp and closed with a very loud noise. This so

frightened the birdies that a regular struggle began in the little nest, and one was forced out over the side. The poor thing spread his little bare wings and tried to fly, but it was a desperate effort, and after fluttering aimlessly about, he finally landed on Buttercup's porch. Both mistress and Guy went down in great haste to get him, but the little truant would not be caught, and his wings seemed to be gaining strength with every second of exercise. He fluttered across the street, and hovered around on the lawn, till finally Mr. Harrison picked him up and put him in a tree, and there Robert and Rena found him and took care of him. I watched him from the window-sill, and I couldn't help having some thoughts that are hardly proper for a good cat.

By the time mistress returned to the piazza, every one of the robins had left the nest, and we cats saw them no more.

Mistress gave many anxious sighs during that afternoon, and Guy tried to comfort her as best he could. "If God takes care of the sparrows," said he, "don't you suppose He will also take care of the robins?"

Mistress did not speak for some moments, then

she said: "Well, my boy, some day you will be leaving your home just as the birdies left theirs to-day, and dangers will surround you. Then my dear, may you lean hard on the Book wherein you read that God takes care of the sparrows."

I am very glad I have had a chance to get acquainted with the robins, and I hope next spring they will come to us again.

XXII

NEW NEIGHBORS

IN the rear of our yard there was a very tall fence post with a flat top, and on it I loved to sit in the sun and watch the chickens in the adjoining yard.

Near the chicken coop was a kennel wherein lived Napoleon, a black shepherd dog, whom they called "Nap" for short. When I first knew Nap he was chained almost constantly, and often for days at a time he was without food or water. His howls and cries were pitiful, and all the neighbors talked about what an outrage it was to treat a dog so mean. One day our mistress called Nap's mistress over to the fence and engaged her in a friendly talk, and after a while she asked why Nap was always chained. The lady said it was because her husband considered him a very valuable dog, and did not wish to lose him.

"Have you ever tried to bind him to his home with love and affection?" said mistress. "I have

found in my experience with animals that it will forge a chain far stronger than iron."

The lady said she would speak to her husband, and I am sure she has, for after that Nap had his meals more regularly, and he was free to roam where he pleased; and he proved himself very useful to the old hens in helping to keep strange cats out of the yard, while their chicks were small.

One Sunday morning when mistress was out in the yard with us, Nap came over to our fence barking for joy, and peeping in at us between the pickets. He seemed so happy to be at liberty. Mistress had brought a lunch out for us, and she offered him some of the meat, which he devoured greedily. I was glad to share my breakfast with him, for having known Dennis so long, I cannot help feeling very friendly toward all dogs.

But Budge and Toddy evidently did not care to share their meat with Nap, so they did what cats often do when they meet with an unpleasant surprise; they sang a song. Budge's voice is a baritone, Toddy's a tenor and mine a soprano. But I did not join them on this occasion.

I suppose you have often listened to cat concerts, and perhaps you have wondered why cats' music is

always so sad and doleful. The reason for this is that cats sing only when they are sad or in trouble, when they are contented and happy, they purr.

As soon as the song was ended, Napoleon began to whine, and thrust his nose between the pickets again. I think he wanted more song, but Toddy evidently thought he wanted more breakfast, for the moment his nose was well through between the pickets, Toddy made a lunge for it, and this proved to be Napoleon's Waterloo. Before he could withdraw, his nose was a perfect network of scratches, with blood oozing out of them like so many small beads.

After Napoleon had retreated, mistress called us into the house, but in the afternoon I went out there again and jumped over on Nap's side of the fence into the tall grass. But the old speckled hen drove me back with her cackle as she had often done before. She probably thought I was another naughty cat like Buttercup who stole her chickies ; but, really, I was only looking for grasshoppers. Now, although I am not much acquainted with Napoleon, I have given him a place in my book, because I want my readers to stop and think how cruel it is to keep a dog chained all the time, and

to leave him without his regular supply of food and water.

I will now tell you about Bunny, a little Manx cat that came to our house every evening at supper-time. She did not offer to stay only just long enough to get something to eat. Guy named her "Bunny" because she has only a little stump of a tail, and when running she would raise her back just like a rabbit. I think Bunny must have come from the same country that Jack did, for she was the same kind of a cat, only she was gray, just like Budge. In fact she resembled Budge so much that we were all horrified the first time we saw her. We thought it was Budge himself, and that some one had cut off his tail.

But while Toddy and I were busy smelling of the stranger, and mistress was bewailing the sad fate of her pet, in walked Budge, tail and all, carrying in his mouth a dead sparrow, which he laid at mistress' feet with a great deal of pride. Then Toddy and I left off examining Bunny and turned our attention to the bird.

Mistress often used to say she wondered where Bunny got the rest of her meals, and where she kept herself; so one evening after Bunny had eaten

her supper, Guy and I followed her ; and what do you suppose we found ? We traced Bunny into a vacant lot, and there under some shrubs was a little cave, dug into a bank of autumn leaves. This was Bunny's home, and in it she had living with her five as chipper and lively little Manx cats as one could wish to see. Guy interested Don and Teddie in the little Bunnies, and the two boys brought them food mornings and noons ; so that thereafter they had three square meals a day. The boys also found good homes for them as soon as they were old enough to leave their mother.

In the rear part of Mrs. Watt's yard the grass is allowed to stand all summer so it becomes very tall. It was just a capital place for us cats to play hide and go seek, and to catch grasshoppers. I heard mistress say to Charlie one day that she wondered what we cats found to interest us so much in his back yard ; so I thought I would show her. The following Sunday, when she sat on the piazza, I carried a hopper up-stairs and laid him down at her feet. She was busy reading and did not notice him at once ; but when he began flying around and I after him, she laid her book down and watched us. After the hopper had landed on the floor several

times, and I had had several rounds with him, he seemed pretty well tired out, and remained still for a few moments. Mistress picked him up, and seeing he was not the least bit injured, she placed him on the vines, which was very nice for the hopper, but rather cruel to me, I thought. But nothing daunted, I went down-stairs and fetched another one. As I laid him on the floor mistress seemed horrified, for she thought I had mutilated him carrying him so far. She had not known up to this time where the first one came from. She was just reaching out to take my treasure from me, when Mr. Hopper flew toward the ceiling, which led her to conclude that he must be all right, and she did not interfere with me any further. Thus during the warm summer weather I had many pleasant times with my little playfellow, the grasshopper.

XXIII

OUR SUMMER OUTING

WHEN the time came again for mistress and Guy to take their outing, they were quite puzzled what to do with so many cats.

“It was easy enough,” said mistress, “to take one cat when we traveled by boat, and went to grandpa’s. But three cats, and traveling on wheels, and stopping at hotels, is quite a different thing.”

“Perhaps you can make an arrangement with Charlie Watt to take care of them,” said Guy.

Mrs. Watt was sitting on her veranda, and before mistress went away that morning, she went over and asked whether Charlie could take care of us during her absence; and as Charlie was present and said he would be delighted to do it, his mother assented.

I was very thankful, for Charlie and his mother had always been very kind to us.

Soon after that, one morning, two gentlemen

called, and mistress and Guy rode away with them. Our basket and plate had been placed in Mrs. Watt's kitchen, and Charlie fixed us a very nice meal at dinner-time, and we played with the grasshoppers in his yard, so the first day went off all right.

But the very next day we saw what threatened to destroy our peace of mind at Charlie Watt's. His neighbor had a great fat pug dog, who acted very ungentlemanly from the first, and tried his best to frighten us, peeping between the fence pickets and barking as loud as he could. That very morning the grocer had left our gate open, and Pug who had been watching for such a chance, came in, snorting with rage. It was clearly a declaration of war; but to my great surprise, Budge, who is usually very timid, was the first to take up arms against the enemy. With the most artistic curve in his back, and bristling his tail to suit the occasion, he started out, single-handed and alone. Of course, Toddy and I were not slow to follow such a courageous leader, and for a time the peaceful yard resembled a torrid race-track, with Pug in the lead and myself on the home-stretch.

As round after round took a little wider range,

Pug was nearing the corner where the ash pile is located, and stumbling over a tin can, he fell to the ground, and we three on top of him. Being such a fat fellow, he was much more easily exhausted than we, who are lithe and agile; and once down, surrounded as he was, his defeat was complete. Nothing remained but an ignominious surrender. He crouched like the coward that he was, begging for mercy. But we did not let him off until we had thoroughly humbled him, chasing him back several times when he attempted to go, and that was the last difficulty we ever had with Pug.

One night during mistress' absence, we heard a terrible noise, and the next morning Buttercup's mangled and bleeding body lay in our front yard. It was said that a dog had done the awful deed.

But the cat population was not diminished by Buttercup's sudden taking off, for on that very same morning, Daisy had a little speckled kitty in her basket—only one. But that was enough for poor little Daisy to take care of, for she had a rattle in her throat, which Dr. Smith called "consumption." I think that is why Daisy was not invited to go with us to Mrs. Watt's. But Charlie gave her food and water daily at the basement window, and after

Buttercup was gone, she had her own little kitten to keep her company.

We were just enjoying our vacation very nicely, when one morning Budge disappeared, and that night we could not find him anywhere, although we could hear his doleful cry coming from some place, no one knew just where. I tremble to think what would have become of poor Budge, if mistress hadn't come home in time to save him.

Late the next afternoon she and Guy rode up to the curb. I was lying on the grass, and Toddy was in the hammock with Charlie.

As soon as I heard mistress' voice, I rushed out to meet her, and she picked me up and petted me, and said how glad she was to get home again. Then Mrs. Watt told her the distressing news that Budge had not been seen for two days. As soon as Guy reached his room up-stairs, he heard a muffled "meow" coming out of the wall, and in reply to his name Budge answered "meow," "meow." In the cellar his voice could be heard very plainly, so mistress went there and tried to coax him down with a piece of raw beefsteak. He was just above the studding; having taken fright at something, and crawled up between the boards

of the inside and outside wall, to the second story.

After trying for several hours to coax him down, mistress went at ten o'clock at night to get a carpenter to open the wall. The good man had already gone to bed, but he arose and came with mistress. He pried away a base board in Guy's room, and Budge stuck his head through the opening, and mistress pulled him out. Toddy and I were very glad to have our companion with us again, and I hope another time Budge will know enough to run up a tree, instead of getting himself into such a predicament.

The day before mistress came home, a water spaniel puppy arrived from the country, that had been sent to Charlie as a present. He looked just like Dennis, and I hoped he would grow to be as good and wise a dog; but it was not to be so, for he only lived a few days after he came. They named him "Brownie." So innocent and unsuspecting was he, he would walk right up to us cats and kiss our noses. If he had been a big handsome dog like Dennis, we would not have objected so much. But lady cats don't care to be kissed by silly little puppy dogs. But no matter how many times Toddy

scratched his face, Brownie was so forgiving; the very next minute he would go up to him again. As for Budge, whenever Brownie came near him, he growled so deep down in his throat that once mistress actually looked up into the sky and asked Guy whether he heard that thundering, and Brownie did not venture any farther. After getting several more scratches and a good many taps, he finally stayed away from Toddy. But he came to me whenever he wanted to, and I tried to teach them by my example that a little innocent, harmless puppy is not to be treated like a big, saucy, ferocious dog.

If Brownie had not disobeyed his mistress I think he would be with us still; but the day after we returned home he came into our yard between the fence pickets and helped himself to a dinner that was intended for three cats, a little more than a puppy dog ought to attempt at a single meal. But Brownie evidently thought himself equal to it, and when he went away, our plate was empty. He could not go back the way he came, but had to go around the house and through the gate. That was Brownie's last visit to us, for that same evening, after suffering dreadful agonies in spite of all that

mistress and Mrs. Watt did for him, poor Brownie lay down on the lawn and died.

I couldn't help thinking of poor Dappledun, of whom it is written :

“ He ran in clover up to his knees,
His trough was filled with stuff;
Yet he'd jump the neighbor's fence, and act
As if he hadn't enough.

“ If only he could have been content
With his feed of oats and hay,
Poor headstrong, foolish Dappledun
Had been alive to-day.

“ But one night when the rack was filled
With what he ought to eat,
He thrust his nose out of his stall,
And into a bin of wheat.

“ And there he ate, and ate, and ate,
And when he reached the tank
Where Johnny watered him next morn,
He drank, and drank, and drank.

“ And when that night John carried him
The sweet hay from the rick,
He lay and groaned, and groaned, and groaned,
For Dappledun was sick.

“ And when another morning came
And John rose from his bed,
And went to water Dappledun,
Poor Dappledun was dead !”

Early the following morning I saw Mr. Watt carry the little stiff body out to the rear part of the yard, where he dug a deep, dark hole. There he planted Brownie just as the rays of the rising sun were gleaming over the housetop; and it seemed as though even the proud and stately hollyhocks were bending their heads in sorrow over our young friend's untimely taking off.

So you see we had all sorts of experiences during our summer vacation.

XXIV

RAISING A FAMILY

VERY soon after we had gone to Maple Road to live, one night a lot of little kittens came into my basket; I suppose the kind Providence had sent them, for it was not yet time for Santa Claus to be around again. The little things squirmed and whined most pitifully, and I covered them with my body to keep them warm.

As soon as it was daylight I took a look at my visitors, and there, behold, were six little blind, helpless creatures, two tigers, two Maltese and two black. "What will my mistress say," thought I, "when she sees this?" I must confess I awaited her coming with some misgiving, fearing very much that she would be displeased.

When mistress opened the door in the morning I arose and went to meet her as usual, and I apologized as best I could; but she did not even seem surprised. She petted me just as she was wont to

do, or if anything even more fondly, and my saucer of milk that morning tasted as if it was more than half cream. While I was eating my breakfast, Guy came out, and together they examined my kittens, and praised them. "Aren't they beauts," said he, as he fondled one after the other; "I wish we could keep them all."

After breakfast mistress lifted the pad with my kittens out of the basket and made us up a fresh clean bed with an old comfortable, which was large enough to fall over the rim of the basket, and so prevented any draughts from striking my little ones. Then for many days mistress brought my food and water to me, for with so many kittens I was busy every minute washing them to keep them sweet and clean.

At the end of about ten days my kittens began to open their eyes; and to be able to crawl over each other, and over me as well. One by one, as their eyesight became stronger, they would crawl up on the comfortable and look over the edge of the basket; and very often one would step over a little too far, lose his balance and tumble over unto the floor. Then after a few minutes of groping around he would begin to cry, and I had to go and

bring him back, unless Guy or mistress happened to be there.

One day I heard mistress say to Guy: "These kittens seem to be strong in their bodies but weak in their limbs, they topple over when they attempt to walk."

"They need to exercise their limbs more," said Guy. "They ought to have a larger place to move around in."

Then mistress spread an old comfortable on the floor in a sheltered corner of her room, and placed a market-basket in the middle of it, in the bottom of which was a bag full of stones to keep it from falling over when the kittens should climb up on the side of it. Mistress then put the kittens on the comfortable, and in an instant they began hobbling around and in and out of the basket. I lay on the comfortable with them, and watched them with great pleasure. Whenever one got far enough away from the "gym" (as Guy called the basket) to feel lonesome, he would whine; but at my call would follow the direction of my voice, and promptly return. By degrees they became so independent that they would walk clear to the edge of the thick comfortable, tumble over the "embankment," and

meander off at their own sweet will; and so they grew daily stronger.

One pleasant Sunday when mistress and Guy were at home, the comfortable was spread on the garden lawn, with the basket upon it as usual. At first I protested most seriously against this innovation, and started to take my kittens back to their accustomed place in the house. But they had grown so large, it was impossible for me to carry them up the steps, and I had to let them stay. I soon found, however, that the radiant sunshine was as a tonic to them, filling them with joy and strength and courage, and before the afternoon was gone, I had become well pleased with the change.

Just as soon as the sunshine disappeared, Guy put the kittens into the basket and carried them back into the house, and after that I never objected when they were given an outing.

Oh, how very happy I was in those days, with my little ones basking around me in the beautiful sunshine, for even in the house mistress always saw to it that our comfortable was in a sunny place. The basket became the scene of most wonderful activity. Guy said it was horizontal bar, side horse, long horse and race-track all in one; and

here were performed some remarkable acrobatic feats, all of which served to make my little ones strong and steady. Of course I was very busy training them in various ways, and first of all I took great care to teach them clean and orderly habits. In this respect mistress was always very helpful, for she left each day a little box of fresh earth beside my basket, and whenever she saw one hunt around and get into a corner, she would go after him and set him into the box, and very soon they understood what it was there for.

As soon as they were old enough I tried to teach them to lap milk with me from the saucer, and this proved to be the hardest task of all. They seemed to get the milk all up into their noses, instead of on their tongues, and it was a veritable sneezing bee. Then again some seemed to think that the saucer was a bath tub. Topsy, one of the black ones, walked deliberately into the dish, and when in the middle of it, sat down and took a sitz bath. Guy said he guessed she wanted to change her complexion. But in a few moments she landed safely on the other side. Meow Junior, one of the tigers, was satisfied to merely face about and dip his tail into the milk, much to the disgust of the rest. But in

a few days they had learned to lap milk very nicely, and I thought it was time to take the next step in their education; so I carried my piece of beef to them, to teach them how to chew something solid.

When mistress saw it she was quite alarmed, and promptly took the meat away. But I persisted, fetching it back several times, till finally she let me have my way, saying that a mother was the best judge of what was good for her children. Then seeing that only one could get access to the piece, because he would growl so fiercely as to frighten the others away, she gave a piece of meat to each one. Of course, they could not chew very much as yet, and the pieces were too large to swallow whole, but it was excellent exercise for their jaws and teeth, and a pleasant pastime as well.

On the first day that my kittens began to feed from a dish, they also began to practice at washing themselves, and it was a winsome sight to watch their earnest endeavors to do their very best. I was so thankful that mistress did not forget to keep a saucer of water in a convenient place for them. Then, having made their toilet, usually they would lie down in groups of two, or three, and take their after dinner nap.

One day when I was on mistress' bed with my kittens, Guy laid his hat down by us, and Topsy went over and lay on the crown of it. It being a soft felt, her weight caused the crown to cave in, but this seemed to suit Topsy all the better. She settled down contentedly in the little round box and began to purr so loudly as to attract the attention of the other kittens. Meow Junior, seeing that Topsy had found such a good thing, concluded to join her; and so one by one they all deserted me, and meandered in the direction of the hat. When I looked up, to my great amusement the five kittens were lying in a circle on the rim with Topsy in the middle, and the hat had the appearance of being trimmed with cats.

In telling this incident I hope I shall not set any one to thinking that kittens would make suitable ornaments instead of the poor unhappy birds that do such melancholy duty on some ladies' hats.

Thus for many weeks I devoted myself so constantly to my little ones that mistress called me "the good little mother."

XXV

BREAKING HOME TIES

It was with the greatest pleasure that I gave myself to the care of my babies; and oh, with what pride I watched their progress from day to day, and how very happy I felt when at my call they would cease their playing and come and rest on my bosom. But, sad to tell, to every mother there comes a cruel and relentless day, when her darlings are taken from her. When that day has come and she mourns in her loneliness and sorrow, her only comfort then is the thought that she has so trained her little ones that they will be a pleasure and a joy to the people with whom they live. I know that this is what my dear mother endeavored to do for me, and the same I tried to do for mine.

My kitties were about three months old, when one day Miss Dorothy called. Mistress called her "Mrs. Fogg," but to me she will ever be only my dear Miss Dorothy.

She had a bunch of delicious English violets at her waist, and as she held me on her lap I became so intoxicated with their fragrance that unwittingly I bit off a few of them. When Miss Dorothy discovered that I liked them she gave me the whole bunch, and, oh! what a feast! They were the first I had had since Aunt Minnie visited us; and by the way I must tell you about that. We cats are very glad when Aunt Minnie comes, because then somebody always sends such beautiful flowers to the house. The last time they happened to be English violets, and, of course, we went up to the vase to look at them and to smell of them. Such beautiful violets! Their fragrance filled the entire room.

After dinner when Guy and Aunt Minnie came into the library, I heard her say "What's the matter with these violets? Nothing is left of them but the bare stems."

"I'll be jiggered," said Guy. "I don't know where you'll find them unless it's inside of those cats." Just then the door bell rang and Aunt Minnie's friend came in. When they told him about the sad fate of the violets he laughed heartily, and said they would stop and get some

more on the way to the concert. So I fear that the violets were not intended for our dinner.

But to return to Miss Dorothy ; it was a beautiful day, and mistress brought her into the garden where my kittens were gathered around their big saucer. As each one finished he sat down and gave himself a good washing. Then they gave a quite noteworthy performance of acrobatic skill on the gym : some taking possession of the horizontal bar, while others scaled the walls, or ran a race on the edge.

I think I was the only one in the entire company that was not perfectly happy that afternoon, for I half-suspected what Miss Dorothy had come for. She carried a very suspicious looking basket with a cover on it ; and sure enough, when she prepared to take leave, mistress picked up my two little tigers and carried them into the house, and in a few minutes I heard the carriage roll away. That was the last I saw of my little tigers. Oh, how my heart ached ; and yet I knew perfectly well what a happy home they would have. What must a mother's feelings be who has to see her babies taken away from her without this blessed assurance ?

It was not long after Miss Dorothy's visit, when late one evening I missed Topsy, and Jasper one of the Maltese. After searching for them in every place I could think of, I finally gave up in despair; but on the following morning I heard a very familiar sound coming from the next yard. I mounted the fence, and looking over there I saw my kittens basking in the sunshine on a big rug in Mrs. Moody's yard. My first thought was to go and fetch them back; but the fence was very high, and the kittens were quite heavy; I had to give it up. There was one thing that worried me: Mrs. Moody's dog Jip is a very saucy fellow; I did not know how he would treat my babies, and I kept a pretty close watch on him. But one day I saw him lying on the rug with Topsy between his paws, and Jasper on his shoulders, and after that I could no longer entertain any unkind thoughts of Jip.

A few days after this, Teddy called with his little sister Dorothy, a sweet little girl with beautiful flaxen curls. They played with my kittens for a long time, telling each other which they liked best; and as they had brought a big covered basket with them I rather surmised what they had come for. In fact I have learned to heartily dislike people

who go around carrying covered baskets. But I knew that I could not keep my babies much longer, so I just tried to be brave, and resigned to my fate. Teddy said he liked the black one, but Dorothy preferred the Maltese.

“What are you going to call them, Teddy?” said mistress.

“I shall call them Punch and Judy, or some names that fit together like that,” answered Teddy.

“But how will it be next summer, when you go to the Lake Shore?”

“We will have some one take care of them while we are gone,” said Dorothy.

This satisfied mistress, and she told them they could have the kittens.

Then I went out to see if I couldn't find another mousie for them, and after long waiting at a neighboring ash pile I finally captured one, and I hastened to bring my babies this last offering. But when I reached the garden I found my basket empty, and the old comfortable that had been our rallying place, deserted. The dreaded hour had come; I was a broken-hearted mother, bereft of all my little ones. I cared nothing more for the mousie so I let it go. Of course, I cried, and searched

every nook and corner on the premises before giving up my last hope. When at last I entered the house, mistress took me up very tenderly and spoke comforting words to me, and that night for the first time in many weeks I slept again at the foot of her bed.

XXVI

A FRIENDLY CHAT

BUDGE has a habit of sitting on all fours with his paws curled under, his tail drawn tightly around his body, and his eyes half closed; and whenever Guy sees him in that position he says "behold the Sphinx."

One summer evening when we three were out on the piazza, I asked Budge what his thoughts were on such occasions. "Generally about dogs," said he. "I have been trying for a long time to think what dogs are good for anyhow, and as I can't think of a single thing, I wonder why there should be any dogs in the world at all."

I told Budge he must not judge all dogs by these saucy curs that come into our yard to eat up our dinner and bark at us. Said I: "Have you never heard of Owney, the Postal dog, that has traveled all over this country, bringing joy and good cheer to the hearts of the poor toiling men that work on

the cars? Or of Mose, that lived for many years in an engine-house, and attended every fire, cheering on the horses and the men, and no doubt helping to save many lives? Or of Barri, the noble St. Bernard, that saved the lives of more than forty travelers who were buried beneath the snow? Or, have you forgotten our dear friend Dennis, that used to protect us from the attacks of fierce dogs when we were small kittens on Poplar Avenue? ”

“ I never heard of Mose or Owney or Barri,” said Budge. “ I wish you would tell us more about them.”

“ Well,” said I, “ those were high-minded and noble animals, and useful in their day and generation.”

“ That’s just what I want to be too,” said Budge.

“ And so do I,” said Toddy. “ But aren’t there any noble and useful cats in the world? ”

“ Yes,” said I: “ I can mention the names of cats as well as dogs for your example: Toots Willard, for instance, who contributed over \$20.00 towards the temperance cause from the sale of his photographs, and who writes letters to the Union Signal, urging and encouraging his comrades to support the good work; Meow, my namesake, who was

such a joy and comfort to grandpa for seven years ; and Blackie and Jack, the famous rat-catchers."

"Now that you mention it," said Budge, "I am reminded that there are many useful and valuable cats who have not even a name to be remembered by. Only a few days ago a lady who works in a commission house, told our mistress that they have fourteen cats in their place, and that indeed without them they could not carry on their business, for the rats and mice would ruin everything if the cats didn't drive them away." Here Toddy took the word :

"This reminds me," said he, "of a story I once heard about a man who owned a warehouse, and who had four sons. In the warehouse lived a big Maltese cat named Jimmie, whose favorite resting-place was on top of the bookkeeper's desk, where he was wont to take his daily nap. In course of time the father died, and the four sons divided the warehouse between them. They also divided the cat so that each one knew which quarter of Jimmie belonged to him. One day soon after the division the cat was bitten in the right foreleg by a rat he had caught, and as that quarter of the cat belonged to Paul, the youngest son, he bandaged it and saturated the bandage with coal oil to take out the

pain. That day when Jimmie was napping on the desk as usual, the bookkeeper laid down a lighted cigar which rolled over toward Jimmie and ignited the bandage. In an instant the poor creature was enveloped in flames, and in his terrible anguish and fright he ran up and down the warehouse, so that it was set on fire, causing great damage. When all was over the brothers had a meeting, and the three agreed that as Paul's quarter of the cat had done the damage, he ought to pay them for their loss. This Paul refused to do, and as they could not agree, the four brothers then went before a judge; and how do you suppose the judge settled it? He said it was Jimmie's three well legs that had enabled him to run around the warehouse and scatter the fire, and not his sore one at all. And so instead of Paul paying his brothers for their loss, they had to pay Paul for his. As for poor Jimmie, he died at his post of duty a victim to man's heedlessness."

Another brave cat did service on the Battleship Texas in Santiago Bay, and I heard mistress read one evening how he stayed on the deck with the soldiers while the Spanish bullets went whizzing around him, and when every dog had gone whining and howling down to the bottom of the ship.

On the same occasion mistress read another piece which she cut out, saying it would be a good thing for my story. It said :

“ The largest student lodging house in Ithaca burned last night. Mrs. Stilwell, the boarding-house mistress, stated this morning that she believes her life and the lives of all the occupants were saved by a favorite cat which went mewing up and down the halls. She awoke and spoke in a quieting tone to the pet, but it would not remain quiet and came into her room and pulled with its claws on the bedclothes until she got up.”

Said I “ All this only goes to prove that no matter where you put a cat, whether on land or sea, amid peril or safety, if given a fair chance he will always fearlessly and honestly do his part.”

“ Yes,” said Budge, taking on his sphinx-like attitude, “ and what a pity these last mentioned heroes didn't have names, so their memory could be honored and cherished by future generations of cats. But I am thankful we have such a wise cat as you for a companion, and I for one shall try and be a better and more useful cat hereafter.”

“ I have already begun,” said Toddy : “ don't you remember, Budge, the other day when you did

something very naughty in mistress' room, I called you to me on the window-sill and covered myself over you so mistress could not find you? And when she came in, she was so touched by my effort to shield you from disgrace, that she did not punish you?"

"Yes," said Budge, "and I helped you whip Pug, when he came into Mrs. Watt's yard?"

"You have both made a very good beginning," said I, "and if you keep on you will both leave a good example for other cats to be proud of, just as we take pride in these we have talked about."

And now, although we are never even mentioned in the books of the proud and highly favored Angoras, still I will return good for evil and relate here an incident which I heard mistress read in a newspaper, of the valor of an Angora.

"I shook the paw of a remarkable Angora cat at the veterinary hospital the other day. He was there to recover from an attack of influenza, and looked thin and gaunt, although his yellow tail was as erect and as bushy as ever. It seems this feline is devoted to a little poodle that is his constant companion. Twice the poodle's life has been endangered by big dogs, and in each instance this otherwise gentle cat

has flown upon the foe and killed him. One would scarcely believe this gracious yellow creature was the slayer of two fierce bulldogs, but such is his record."

XXVII

ANOTHER HOME

ONE day soon after Brownie's death Dorothy and Teddy came over with Judy, their little Maltese kitty, all nicely cuddled up in a covered basket, and asked mistress if she would keep her till they returned from the Lake Shore.

"You know we promised to have some one take care of the kittens during our vacation," said Dorothy, "and we couldn't think of anybody that would do it better than you."

Mistress seemed very much pleased at this. She praised the children for remembering their promise so well and told them that Judy might stay. Then she added, "But who is going to take care of Punch?"

"We intend to take him along," said Teddy; "we would take Judy too, but mamma thinks two cats will be too much trouble."

"Oh, no," said mistress, "you must either take both, or leave both. If they are separated so long

they will become estranged, and then they will no longer live together peaceably."

"Then you will have to keep Punch, too," said Dorothy.

"Rather than have them separated, I will do so," said mistress, "but you must bring their basket and cushions, so they will have some familiar objects to attract them to this place."

So Teddy went home and fetched Punch and the cat furniture, and while he was gone I had a little chat with Judy. She did not remember me at first, and acted quite saucy for a while. But when I told her that I was her mother, and how I had nursed her and Punch, and raised them to be the handsome cats they were, she snuggled up to me and said, "Oh, yes; now I remember: you used to wash us, and bring us mousies to play with; and I remember also the beautiful lullaby you used to sing to us:

Rockaby, hushaby, Pussy, my dear,
The dogs are all chained and there's nothing to fear!

"Oh, how we did want our dear mother that first night in our new home! We just cried and cried till we finally dropped asleep."

When Teddy returned, mistress fixed up a cozy corner for our little summer boarders, as she called Punch and Judy, in the kitchen.

That same evening the landlord called on mistress, and I heard him talk in a very upbraiding way about so many cats on his premises; and finally he said in a lofty and scornful tone: "You must either get rid of them, or leave the house."

On the very next evening the trunks and boxes were brought down from the attic, and mistress and Guy started to packing as if they were going on another journey.

One morning a few days later we cats were all taken to the attic, where we stayed for a long time.

I was just raising another family, and I wondered what was going to be done with me. But soon after lunch time mistress came with a large covered wicker basket into which she put me with my kittens on a nice soft pad. Peeping through the cracks of the basket I could see her put Toddy, Punch and Judy into the laundry bag, and when we were all fixed up Guy came to fetch us downstairs. There I discovered the moving van, all loaded, and Guy, who is very strong, mounted the wagon with us. Budge had the honor of riding

a-wheel with mistress, tied securely into the Switzerland bag.

And now methinks I hear some of you say "but what became of poor sickly Daisy, and homeless Bunny?" I am happy to tell you that before we left our old home both were cared for; Daisy with her little kitty went to the beautiful and happy land where sickness never comes, and where there is a home for every cat; and Bunny and her kittens were all provided with good homes through the kindness of their friends Don and Teddy.

It was a very short ride on the moving van to our new home, and when we halted it was in front of a beautiful white cottage with a spacious vine-covered porch. Mistress met us at the door, and we were taken into a quiet room where we found some salmon already prepared for us on our own plate. Budge was there, too, acting rather shy, and going around smelling of everything with his mouth wide open. But presently Guy brought our pads and cushions from off the wagon and fixed up a comfortable place for me and my babies first, and then for the other cats.

For a time it was very noisy down below, and Punch and Judy were terribly afraid; but after a

while Guy came up and took us outdoors and showed us all around. The moving van had gone, and mistress was putting the things in order. Looking across the back fence I saw a big corn-field, and some vacant lots, so I knew we should not lack for play-room ; and indeed we soon found that the corn-field was an admirable place for a game of hide-and-go-seek.

When we returned into the house mistress had fitted up three nice comfortable corners for us in the kitchen, one for Punch and Judy, one for Budge and Toddy, and a nice big one for me and my babies. In the library there was a window-seat just like the one we had had on Poplar Avenue.

On the same day a young lady came whom mistress called Bettie. We thought at first she was a visitor, because she was so kind and gentle to us cats. But we soon learned that she was the house-keeper.

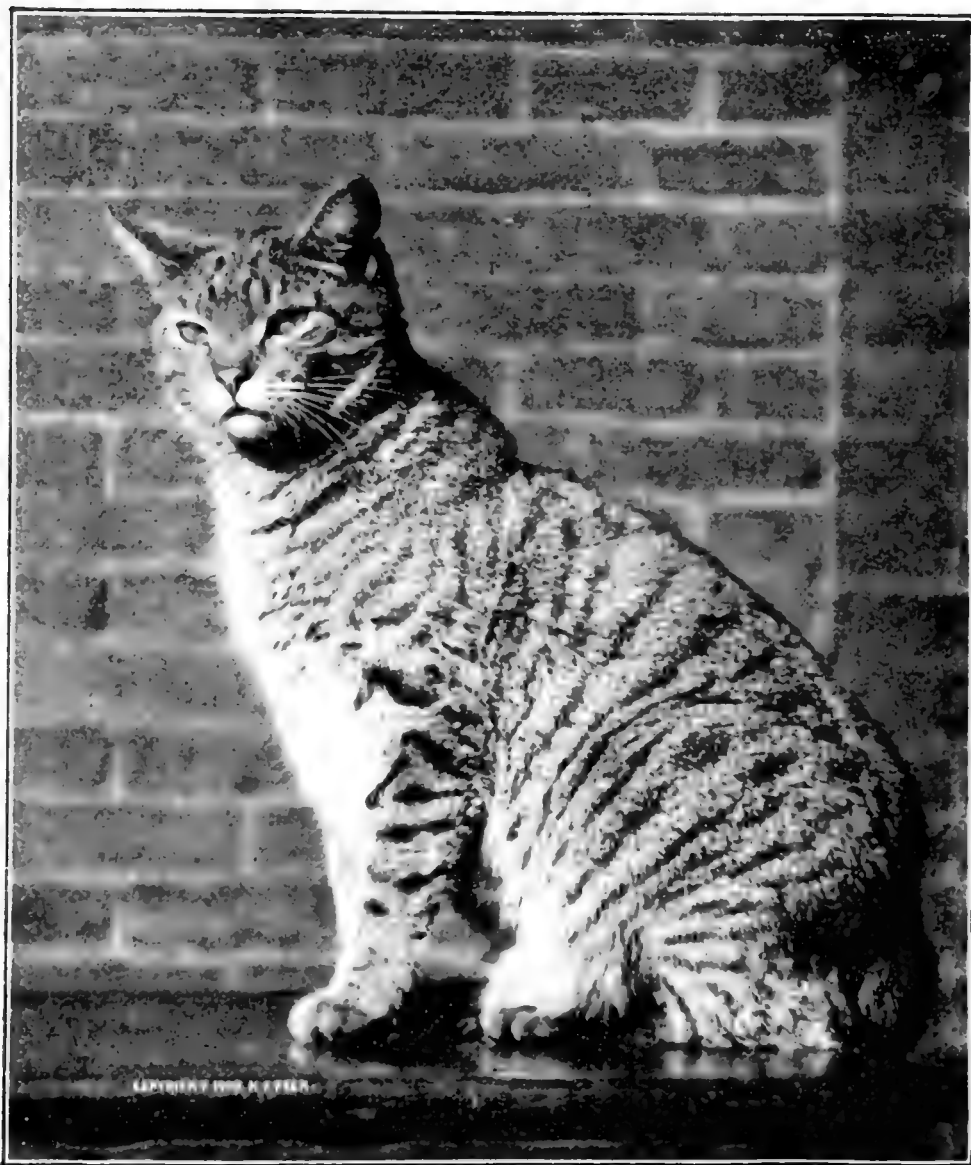
I have heard it said that the reason so many people leave their cats behind when they move into another house is because they believe it brings bad luck to move one.

It don't seem to be so with our mistress ; for each time she has moved so far as I know she has

taken with her to the new house from three to seven cats, and each time it has been to a finer and bigger house than she had before. And now we even have a housekeeper. I should think it is more likely to be the other way: bad luck comes to people who cruelly desert helpless and dependent creatures and leave them unprovided for.

On the other hand, the notion prevails among some people, as I have heard, that it is good luck to have a cat follow you. Of course, it may be presuming too much for a cat to give her opinion so freely; but it seems to me that this good luck will only come to people who will take a kind interest in a poor stray, and who will try to find out where she belongs, or else procure another home for her.

Our new house was on Elmwood Place, and we found to our great delight that our next door neighbors were Miss Wallace, and her little Nellie that she told us about that day on the boat. Nellie is a white cat, but why this should make her think she is any better than we colored cats, I cannot understand. She would sit for hours on her window-sill, and hump her back and hiss every time one of us came in sight; so we véry soon con-



“TODDY, MRS. SMITH’S PARTICULAR FRIEND”

cluded that as for Nellie we wouldn't waste any time trying to be neighborly.

Our neighbor on the other side is a little King Charles spaniel "Bosie," which is short for Bo-Peep. If we happened to be out when he took his exercise he would nearly bark himself hoarse. But we soon gave him to understand that he was not big enough to scare us.

Across the street at Mrs. Smith's lived "Patsy," a water spaniel, who always came over at meal time. If he had not been sold and taken away I dare say mistress would have been obliged to change the location of our dinner plate, for Patsy's nose would almost cover the entire dish, and when he had eaten all he wanted there never was a mouthful left. Still we were sorry to lose Patsy, for he was more like dear old Dennis than any dog I have ever seen.

After Patsy went away, Toddy became Mrs. Smith's particular friend. He told me he liked it over there because of the beautiful porch, with its plants and rugs and cushions; and also because Mrs. Smith was always there; whereas our own house seemed to be deserted all day long.

Punch and Judy were obliged to stay in the

basement all day, because mistress feared they might go away in search of their home. I really don't think it was necessary to keep them indoors because they would stay where their basket is when once they got used to the place; but, of course, mistress did not want to take any chances. Poor Punch and Judy! They complained bitterly at having to be housed in during that beautiful, sunshiny weather. We used to peep in at the basement windows, and it was pitiful to see how they would shift their position so as to get the full benefit of the sun's rays that for a little while during each day meagerly brightened their gloomy abode. To be sure, mistress left them a nice lunch each day, and balls and spools to play with; and she tied strings in various places to tempt them into amusing themselves. But a homesick cat does not care much for these things. We were all right glad when Teddy came to take them back to their home, and I hope that hereafter when they go to the Lake Shore they will take Punch and Judy with them.

Among our new neighbors were Marjory and Doris, two dear little girls who often came over with their doll buggies to take my kittens out to

ride; and after a nice outing they would generally sit on the porch and hold the kittens on their laps a while. Doris' little brother George used to come over too, and sometimes he would try to hold a kitten on his lap, but the poor little thing would slide right through between his legs, which always made George feel very badly, and caused him to cry.

One evening George's mother called, and mistress told her about the children's play with the kittens, and how George cried because he could not hold one in his lap. At this Mrs. Gafney laughed heartily. "That explains," said she, "why George teases me so much lately to dress him up in Doris' clothes and make a girl of him."

So you see we have found some very delightful neighbors in our new house.

XXVIII

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND ADMIRAL DEWEY

JUST before we left Maple Road the kind Providence had sent me five kittens ; but one day upon awaking from my nap, three were missing. I knew they could not have crawled out, for they were only a few days old, and as I looked for them I smelled the odor of that same medicine that mistress gets for homeless and sick cats. I suppose she thought I had too many to take care of ; and knowing that whatever she does is for the best, I gave myself over wholly to those that remained with me.

One of my kittens was black with white toes and a white breast which mistress always called his "white shirt." The markings on his face were so irregular that it made him look as if he had a crooked nose. But he was clever and energetic. His full name was Booker T. Washington, and I used to hear mistress say that he was every whit worthy of it. His immaculate white shirt front, to-



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

gether with his dignified bearing, gave him a real preacher-like appearance.

My other kitten was a Maltese, with white markings. When still very small he was promised to Miss Gracie Jones, one of our new neighbors on Elmwood Place, who came over every day after school and played with him. She named him Admiral Dewey. But Booker was the great favorite, and mistress would not promise him to anybody, although many asked for him.

Soon after we became settled in our new home, both my kittens were taken very ill. They seemed to be in great pain at times, and they would moan and cry out in their helplessness so that it was pitiful to see them. At last they became so weak that they were no longer able to walk from the basket to their box; but mistress bore with them very patiently, as did also Bettie. She would scald milk for them and when it had cooled, feed it to them from a spoon, with a napkin tied around their neck. With such excellent nursing the two invalids began gradually to improve, and Miss Gracie was overjoyed, thinking she would soon be able to take Dewey to her home. But all of a sudden her mother was taken very ill, and the Doctor said they

must go to Denver to live for a long time. Then Miss Gracie had to give up Dewey because Denver, they say, is very far away.

For several days after Miss Gracie's departure Dewey sat on the window-seat almost constantly looking for his friend; and when at last he despaired of her coming he refused to play or to eat, and thus he pined away, until one morning he did not rise at all. When Bettie went to his basket to see what was the trouble, Dewey lay there dead. He had died of a broken heart, I verily believe.

And right here let me relate a story that Guy read to his mother one evening about a little waif of a kitten that a boy found in the basement of his school building in the great city of San Francisco. He was a kind little lad, and anxious to help the kitty, so he took her up to his teacher.

When Guy had read that far he turned to his mother and said, "I know what my teacher would do, if I should bring a cat into the schoolroom; she would put the cat out and make me stay after school."

"Well, read on," said his mother, "and let's see what this teacher did." So Guy read the piece

through, while I lay perched on his shoulder and listened. The story went on to say how the teacher took the kitty in and fixed her a comfortable place behind the stove; how for many days she carried her home for the night and brought her back in the morning; and how she was such a well behaved kitty and always stayed dutifully in her corner, during study hours. But at recess and after school kitty played at marbles with the boys, and caught spools and strings for the girls. By and by some of the children asked permission to take the kitty home, and the teacher allowed them to take her by turns as a reward for good conduct. One morning on the way to school, a saucy dog frightened the kitty, and she escaped from the arms of the boy that was carrying her. But he succeeded in getting her again, and after that somebody sent a fish-net shopping bag to that school for the kitty to be conveyed in. And now she has a different home and a new master or mistress every day; yet she is just as happy with one as another.

Now does not this refute the wicked slander that cats have no love for people, but only for themselves and for their comfortable homes? And is it not true that those who say this are usually the

ones who never gave a cat any affection, and consequently don't deserve any in return?

The loss of little Dewey was indeed a hard blow for Booker, but, fortunately, about that time he made the acquaintance of a new cat in the neighborhood named Molly Scott, a handsome tiger, and his remaining days at mistress' house were really love's young dream.

But even love's young dream is of short duration, if a cat may be allowed to express an opinion on such a matter. One evening mistress wrapped up Booker and took him out in the Switzerland bag to visit a friend, and when she returned it was without him.

"They would not let me bring him back," said mistress when Bettie inquired after Booker. "But I am sure he couldn't find a happier home anywhere, for not only is every member of the family perfectly in love with him, but even the house-keeper begged me to let him stay, and promised to give him the kindest attention."

After Booker's departure, for more than a week his friend Molly came over every morning to look for him. She would meow first at the back door, then at the front door, and not receiving any re-

sponse, would climb up on the different window ledges and call for her friend. But after a while she fell in with a new cat by the name of Goldie, and he, in time, came to fill Booker's place in her affections.

A word about Goldie: One cold winter evening mistress brought home in a bag a yellow tiger cat, which I thought from his appearance must have come from the very slums of catdom. He was all be-draggled with mud, and his face resembled that of a sore-eyed poodle. But after a bath, oh, what a difference! Then it turned out that the stranger had a beautiful fluffy coat of sunshiny yellow and white, with brown stripes intermingled, and the name "Goldie" was thought none too nice for him. The very first neighbor that saw him was ready to adopt him, and this was Mrs. Gafney, the mother of our little friends George and Doris. And there Goldie is to-day, a delightful playmate, and an all-around household treasure.

I noticed during the first few days Goldie was with us that he would not allow any one to touch his tail, and would claw and scratch whoever attempted to touch it, even in a friendly way. Mistress tried her best to teach Goldie better manners

by scratching him on the head and gradually going farther down his back. But just as soon as she got near his tail, Goldie would begin to eye her suspiciously, and indeed poor mistress' hands were a network of scratches before she had gained Goldie's confidence enough so that he no longer dug his fierce claws into her flesh.

I was very curious to know what caused Goldie to act so, and at the first opportunity I asked him the reason.

"Reason enough," said he. "If you had had your tail pinched and twisted as mine has been by a cowardly sneak of a boy, you would be wary too. But I finally tired of such a life and started out in search of a better home."

"And how were you so fortunate as to fall into the hands of our mistress?" said Budge, who had come to hear Goldie's story.

"Fortunate, I should say it was fortunate," said Goldie. "I will tell you all about it. After tramping from door to door for several days, and sleeping under barns and coal sheds, one evening I followed two ladies up to a beautiful house. But evidently they had not noticed me, for as soon as they entered, the door was shut, and I was left behind.

I felt very badly, especially as I had learned from their conversation that they were friends of cats. As I sat there on the porch rail wondering what next to do, I noticed that it was not a very great distance to a brilliantly lighted window, and being anxious to attract the attention of those ladies I made a bold leap and landed safely on the windowsill. There in that beautiful room sat four ladies, and a gentleman, and one of the ladies came at once to the window and begged the gentleman to open it. He did so, and I heard him say something about a "poor apology for a cat" as he took me in and set me on a rug. Then one and another began talking about me in a way that was anything but complimentary, while the lady that had asked to let me in sat on the floor beside me, looking me over, and occasionally rubbing my nose and head.

"I felt that I had at last found a friend, and sure enough, when it was time to go home, she asked for a laundry bag to carry me in, saying she would give me a bath and prepare me for a home because I was a very nice cat. And that is how I was brought here that evening."

Before Goldie went to live with George and

Doris, he spent some very happy days with us. He was a fine mouser, and was always rummaging around the barn over in the corn-field. Of course he never succeeded in catching any mice for the simple reason that the barn is too close to our premises, and no mouse could exist there for a single day.

And now speaking of mice, let me say right here: never expect a poorly-fed, ill-treated cat to catch them, because such a cat in time loses her sense of smell so completely that she is unable to scent mice at all. But on the other hand, the better you treat her, the more she will do for you in return.

XXIX

TWO FAR JOURNEYS

I SUPPOSE you have wondered why I never mention Guy any more. Well, he has gone away off to Boston to attend school. I well remember when a new trunk was brought into the house, and mistress packed all of his things into it so carefully. When it was very nearly filled to the top, she tucked in a box of candy and four little pictures ; one of herself, one of a darling little girl, one of a beautiful lady with a baby in her arms that had a white circle around his head, and one of a group of kittens all standing in a row. On top of the pictures and the candy she laid a new silk muffler, and a beautiful soft, fluffy bath-robe, and before she could put in any more she had to go down-stairs to see a caller.

I had been with mistress all the morning, watching the different things she put into the trunk, and I felt myself getting quite sleepy ; so while she was down-stairs I crawled into the trunk to take my

morning nap, and I found a very cozy little place between the folds of that beautiful robe.

I was just getting nicely settled, when I felt Budge crawling in from the other side. "Isn't this fine," said he, as his nose touched mine; and in less time than it takes to tell it, we were fast asleep in Guy's new trunk.

This was very pleasant, but imagine my feelings when I was rudely awakened by being squeezed so hard that it is a wonder my body has not ever since been flat instead of round; and as for making an outcry, it was utterly impossible. But thanks to the kind Providence, in an instant I felt the pressure released. Just then I heard mistress say something about the trunk being too full, and before I got myself out of the folds of the robe, her kind hands were upon me. As she pulled me out of my hiding-place, she said, "For mercy sakes! cats! did you want to go to Boston, too?" Then without another word she quickly locked the trunk, for the expressman stood ready to take it away. So you see how near we came to going to Boston with Guy.

After Guy had gone, some of mistress' friends advised her to break up housekeeping and to board.

“Just think how much cheaper it would be for you,” said Mrs. Cotton one day; “and with no housekeeping to bother with, how much more leisure time you would have.”

“I don’t know how I would employ my leisure more profitably,” said mistress, “than in maintaining the dear home on which my boy’s tenderest thoughts are centred, and around which cluster those sacred memories that form the very groundwork of a wholesome and rugged life. The very first letter he wrote me started out: ‘I am seated by my window as the sun is setting over my dear western home.’ Now, would he have such fond thoughts of his home, and would he be likely to connect it with the beautiful spectacle of the setting sun, were it reduced to a room in a boarding-house?”

“Again you have convinced me that your way of thinking is right,” said Mrs. Cotton.

And so now, although Guy is no longer with us, we are still in our dear home on Elmwood Place.

When the pleasant weather came again, mistress began to make ready, as usual, for her summer outing. Of course, we did not expect her to take us along this time, because we had heard that she was

going way off to her "dear Switzerland," as she always calls it; and judging from what they say, Switzerland must be even farther off than Denver. But we knew that Bettie would be at home with us, so we were content.

Just before mistress went on her long journey, a lovely young lady came to help her get ready, and the very first day they got to talking about us cats.

"You ought to get acquainted with Mrs. Bolton," said Miss Cummings, "for she is just as great a friend of cats as you are and her home is a perfect haven for strays."

"I am very glad to hear it," said mistress. "Do please tell me about her cats."

"Yes," said Miss Cummings, "Mrs. Bolton has fitted up a little shed at the rear of her house, which is filled up in cold weather with loose straw. Into this place stray or homeless cats and dogs crawl through a small opening and find shelter. Moreover they are fed and made to feel welcome. I have known her to have so many of these transient boarders there that it takes several pounds of meat a day to supply them; and as soon as they look sleek and plump Mrs. Bolton generally finds good homes for them."

“What you say is encouraging,” said mistress, “because I am often criticised, and told that I would do better to lavish my attentions on some neglected child, than on cats. But children have a hundred friends where cats have none.”

“That’s just what I have heard Mrs. Bolton say,” replied Miss Cummings.

“And furthermore I have found,” said mistress, “that my interest in cats has increased my love for human beings, and indeed for all living creatures.”

But to return to the journey. When mistress went away to Switzerland three lovely young ladies came to live at our house, and Bettie kept house for them. Toddy was living with Mrs. Smith and Budge and I stayed at home. But if you should ask me how we spent the long summer, I should have to tell you that we passed a good share of it sitting on the front porch railing, where mistress had placed a shelf behind the vines for our accommodation. There we sat day after day, looking longingly up the street; each wanting to be the first to tell the others the happy news of mistress’ return. At last the robins had sung their good-bye songs, and the grasshoppers had taken their departure. The leaves were beginning to fall

but we did not find any pleasure in chasing them, as we had other years. Our days were passed wearily and sadly, till one morning the joyful news came that mistress had arrived in New York. Oh! how it thrilled us with delight. Budge ran across the street to tell Toddy, and we all went to work to sleek ourselves up so as to look our very prettiest. I had at this time three little kittens just ten days old, and they had that very morning opened their eyes. They, too, had to come in for their share of grooming.

The next morning after breakfast a carriage drove up to the curb, and in it was our mistress. Toddy recognized her from way across the street, and came over mewing a hearty welcome. Budge gave vent to his feelings by means of the graceful curves and spirals of his tail, and as for me, I welcomed her with a succession of winks.

As soon as mistress had greeted us all, she inquired after my kittens just as if she knew all about them, and, of course, I showed them to her with great delight and pride.

“Poor, dear Meow,” said she, “you tried to have a pleasant surprise for my home-coming, didn’t you?”

I winked assent, and then she proceeded to name my babies. The dainty little gray with white breast, she called Lady Jane Grey; the tiger Patsy, and the black one Hiddigeigei, after a famous black cat that lived many years ago in a beautiful castle on the Rhine, and in a German book¹ you can read what an honorable and useful cat he was.

When mistress took a second look at Toddy she seemed visibly affected by the sad plight he was in, for he had been in failing health all summer. His once beautiful body was flabby and wasted, and the once bushy tail stringy, and almost bare. For several days Toddy received mistress' most lavish attention; then all of a sudden he disappeared, and not one of us had any idea whither he had gone, till one evening Mrs. Smith came over and inquired for him.

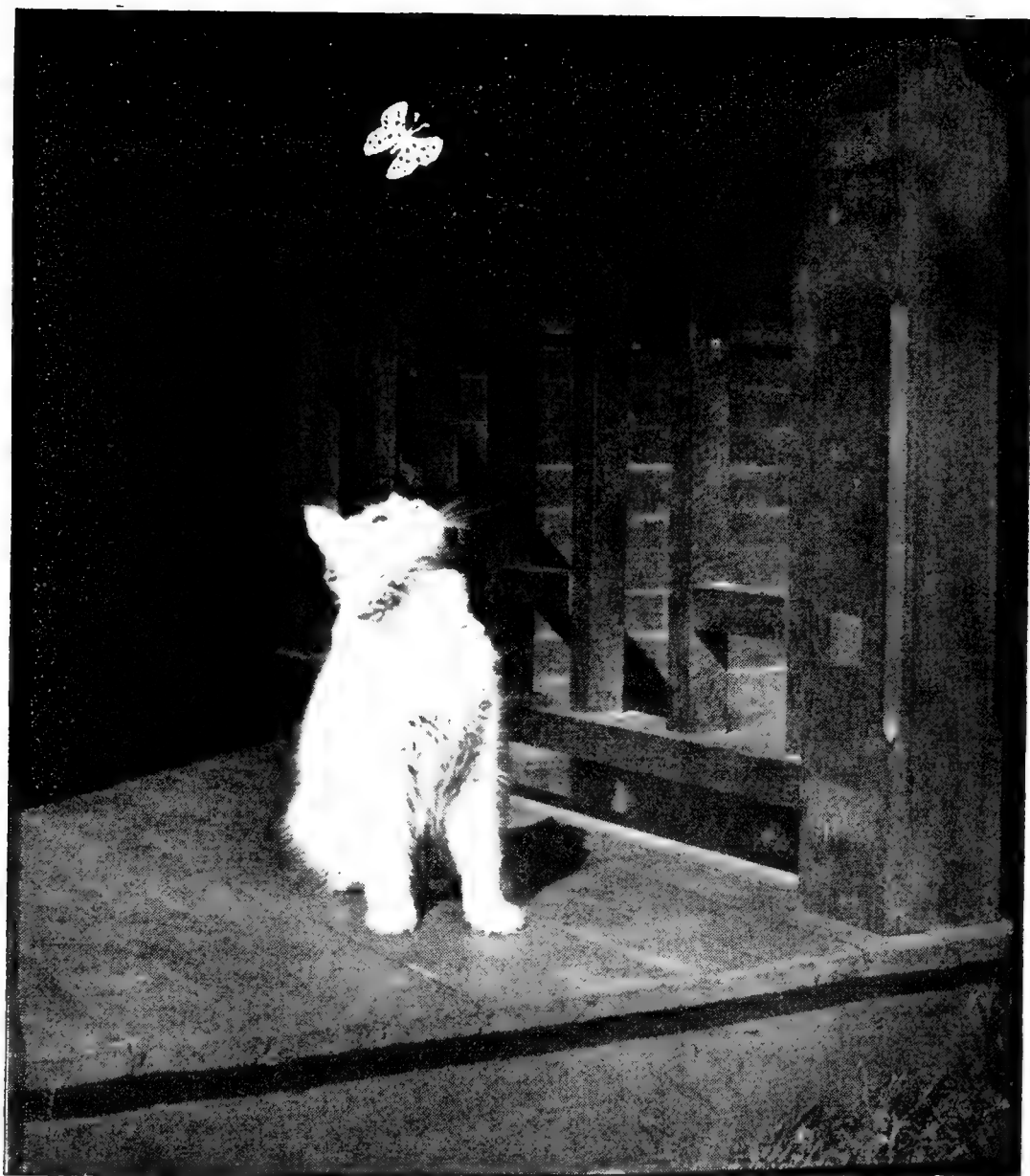
"I took him to the hospital," said mistress, "but it was too late to save him; and he has gone to the other side of Jordan." Mrs. Smith said she was very sorry to miss him, but that, after all, she thought that was the best place for him.

So now, of course, although I don't know where Jordan is, still I am satisfied it must be a very good

¹ Vid. "Der Trompeter von Saeckingen," by Scheffel.

place for cats, if Mrs. Smith and mistress think so; and perhaps I ought to have made the title of this chapter read "Three Far Journeys" instead of two.

About the time mistress returned from Switzerland a lady and a gentleman came to live across the street from us, and they brought with them a white cat. Of course, after the way Nellie had treated us we were in no great hurry to make the acquaintance of Snowdrop, as they called him; but we used to watch him from our shelf on the porch as he would have his ups and downs with Goldie, and we soon discovered that he was very much like the rest of us in his daily conduct. True, there were times when he would sit on his mistress' sewing-table by the front chamber window, and groom and primp himself just like Nellie, and try to look pretty; but the very same day perhaps he would be rolling in the gutter as if he thought a dust bath the very best thing to improve his appearance. Then also he was a great fellow to explore the neighborhood, and after he had nosed around in every nook and corner on his own side of the street he came to our side one afternoon and went over into the corn-field. Budge and I followed him, and after the formal greetings common



SNOWDROP

to cats, we lay down in a sunny corner and had an interchange of views.

“It seems to me you have a pretty lonesome time of it, alone all day,” said Snowdrop, sprawling himself out on the sun-warmed earth as he spoke.

We told him that we had become used to being alone during the day, and what a kind mistress we had, and how we regretted her long absence. Then he told us what a long journey he made with his mistress all the way from a great city called Chicago to his present home.

“Are Chicago cats all white like you?” said Budge.

“No, indeed,” replied Snowdrop, “my very best friend and constant companion in Chicago was a black cat named Topsy. She hadn’t a white hair on her whole body; and she was the mother of two kittens, one all black with white slippers, and the other all white with black tips on her ears and tail. And beside her I knew many other cats just like these around here. So you see that Chicago cats are no different from those in other cities.”

When I asked Snowdrop how he came to leave Chicago and make such a long journey, he said:

“You see it was this way. One day a fine gen-

tleman came to our house, and then there was a great feast with flowers and music and many beautiful ladies. But my mistress was the most beautiful of them all, for she was dressed all in white. Topsy and I were there too, all decked out with beautiful ribbons. But right in the midst of it this young gentleman took my mistress and me away. I was put in a large covered basket; but I did not mind it, so long as my dear mistress was with me. I slept all night in a chair beside her bed, and in the morning early I was again put into my basket. The next time when it was opened I stepped out of it in my present beautiful home. If only Topsy was here, my happiness would be complete."

I told Snowdrop to come over and visit us whenever he felt homesick for Topsy, and he thanked me very kindly. But just at that moment he heard his mistress' call, and like an obedient cat, he arose and went home.

Budge and I promised ourselves many delightful times with Snowdrop; but, sad to relate, that was the last we ever saw of him. We never knew what had become of him till one day Goldie told us that he saw a man pull Snowdrop off the porch-rail in front of his house, and walk away with him.

Of course, his mistress was heart-broken when she discovered that her pet had disappeared; and when, after every effort to find him, she finally gave him up for lost, she came over and selected my little Patsy to take Snowdrop's place as soon as he should be old enough. But I do hope that before that time comes, Patsy's new mistress will put up a shelf for him on her porch, high enough like ours, so passers-by cannot reach him, and behind the vines, so he can see without being seen.

Now I have told you about four far journeys instead of two.

XXX

THE BURGLAR MAN.

NOT very long after mistress' return one evening just after dark a big burglar man came into our house. I knew he was a burglar because he crawled in through the window, and he went into all the rooms. Budge was terribly afraid of him and hid himself under the ice-chest; but Toddy and I followed him up-stairs to see what he would do. First he pulled down all the shades, then lighted a little lamp which he carried, and opened the closets and drawers, and mistress' trunk. He was just about to do up some of mistress' most beautiful dresses into a bundle, when I heard the sound of three very loud whistles on the outside. At this the man instantly dropped everything and rushed down-stairs; and just as he was running out of the back door, Bettie came in at the side.

I did so wish I was big enough to grab him like Beautiful Joe did old Jenkins, and hold unto him till she could catch him. But being only a cat, of

course, I could not do it. Still, if he had touched my kittens I believe I should have summoned up all the tiger within me in my efforts to defend them.

During the evening many of our neighbors came to the house to see what the burglar had done, and from what they said I guess there is no telling what he would have taken if the whistle hadn't sounded just when it did. For all I know he might have taken my babies too. At any rate, I concluded to put them where he couldn't find them, if he ever came again.

Among the neighbors that called that evening was the gentleman that had brought Snowdrop from Chicago. The moment he saw my basket he inquired for Patsy, and mistress took him out and handed him over to his future master.

"Feline stock is bound to rise," said he, as he fondly petted Patsy; "it is becoming the fashion now to have real cats in schools and kindergartens, instead of mere pictures of them."

"Yes," said mistress, "the many-sided usefulness of the cat is gradually becoming recognized. I had a vivid picture of her future possibilities when on a visit to a hospital for insane, where I saw sullen

and turbulent men and women subdued and softened by the winsome ways of a kitten ; and the feelings that its presence seemed to awaken within them seemed to me to point out a new way to ' minister to a mind diseased. ' ”

The gentleman finally put Patsy back into my basket and I felt quite relieved, for I had begun to fear from the way he praised and petted him that he was going to take him away.

That night I hunted for a good hiding-place and before morning I had my darlings all safely tucked away in the basement behind the kindling.

It was no small task to carry each one down the stairs, for they were now several weeks old ; but you know a mother will endure almost any hardship for the sake of her babies.

The poor little things had their rest so broken, that when mistress and Bettie came down they were still sound asleep, and I went up-stairs to get my breakfast at the usual time.

As soon as mistress missed my kittens she and Bettie began hunting for them in every nook and corner, and they looked behind the kindling pile several times ; but I had put them in a hollow space away back among the kindling where they could

not be seen. After a long search they gave it up, hoping they would come to light by evening, and my poor babies lay all that day on the bare stone floor.

I soon discovered that I had made a mistake, for before night their eyes were all watery, and they were sneezing a regular concert, so that when mistress returned in the evening it did not take her long to find them.

She brought them up-stairs and wrapped them in a flannel cloth. Then she fixed our basket with a nice warm blanket, and set it in a sheltered corner behind the cook-stove, and there she installed my babies in their new quarters. For many days every morning and evening she would take a basin of warm water, and with a soft cloth wash out their eyes; for the discharge would make such a thick coating as to close them up completely in a few hours. As the kittens were too small to be fed medicine with a spoon, mistress had to devise some new way of giving it to them. She dipped their paws repeatedly into a mixture called catnip tea, and, of course, they would lick it off.

But even with this ingenious invention it was some weeks before my kittens recovered from the

ill effects of that unhappy day on the basement floor. I was very sorry to have caused my dear mistress so much trouble, and my poor babies so much suffering, but I did it to keep the horrid burglar man from finding them.

A few days after the burglar man had visited us, a handsome water spaniel came to the house and begged for admittance, and mistress very gladly took him in. I think the kind Providence sent him to protect us, for from that time we have never been bothered with burglars.

The dog was named Dennis, because he was the very image of our old-time friend on Poplar Avenue. He and I became good friends at once, but Budge resented his presence so bitterly that for many weeks they could not be allowed in the same room; and it was only by very slow degrees, as Budge saw that Dennis would not molest him, that he came to tolerate him.

When my little kittens had become old enough to run about outdoors, Dennis was very helpful. He would lie near the curb in front of the house, and if one ventured out from the side of the house, he would promptly drive him into the back-yard. He was also fond of tantalizing us at meal-time,

when his meat was thrown out on the grass for him. He would stand off, pretending he did not care for it, and just as quick as one of us would attempt to go and take it, he would come with a bound and a growl, and snatch it away from us, then drop it a little further off, and repeat the operation.

Dennis was in the habit of absenting himself from us every week for a day or two. Once he was absent several days, and upon his return wore a beautiful collar, which, however, was missing when he returned from his next trip. I suppose some folks thought they had found a nice dog, and presented him with a collar; but finding him so inconstant, they deprived him of it the next time he came around.

I must not forget to tell you of the very practical and effective way that mistress has of teaching kittens to know and respond to their names. As you probably know, she always gives a kitten a name as soon as it is born. Then, whenever she picks up one, she keeps repeating its name over and over as she pets it. She also occasionally takes one away from the rest, up to her room or into the library, and there, whether engaged in reading or

writing, she looks up every little while and talks to it, always calling it by name.

And right here let me tell you, a cat with a respectable name feels a sense of dignity and self-respect that is impossible to one only known by the general name of "kitty." Moreover, it gives him a chance to exercise promptness and obedience, qualities which are sure to endear an animal to his master, because, when he hears his name called, he can get right up and run, knowing that it means him and not some other cat.

By the way, Bettie has left us, but it was for her good that she went, and, of course, we would not be so selfish as to be sorry about it, although we miss her sorely. Ever since Bettie came, mistress gave her lessons almost every evening, and Bettie studied very industriously every spare minute. Now she has gone to work in an office and is living in a boarding-house.

"You are very foolish when you have a good housekeeper, to put such high-faluting notions into her head," said Mrs. Cotton, upon hearing where Bettie had gone. "You might have had her for years, if you had just left her alone."

"That's true," said mistress. "But the pleasure

of helping one who is striving to better her condition fully repays for a little inconvenience."

"You had her a year," said Mrs. Cotton, "so you did better than most people do, after all. These girls are always on the move."

"It's because most people look upon them as a mere convenience," said mistress, "instead of as fellow-beings with longings for happiness and advancement like ourselves. Let housewives set before their help a higher ideal and they will set in motion within them forces which will root out the ever-present longing for shifting about from place to place."

Mrs. Cotton acted as if she did not quite agree with what mistress said. She looked at her watch and said it was time for her to go; but before leaving she came over to the bookcase where I had been sitting and gave me a few gentle strokes.

XXXI

A FRIEND IN NEED

JUST before Bettie went away, mistress brought home one evening two little tiger kittens with white breasts and faces, but very thin and haggard looking, and so distrustful. I heard her tell Mrs. Wallace that she had brought them home to try and find homes for them.

“But I couldn't recommend these kittens to anybody before I knew something of their habits,” said mistress, “for if they turned out to be troublesome it would hurt the reputation of our own kittens, and so that is why I brought them home.” Mistress named them Billee and Taffy, and started at once to put them through the usual course of training to fit them for nice homes.

Taffy was a very quiet little fellow, but Billee was quite sociable. On the day after his arrival I had occasion to do him a little favor, and in expressing his thanks to me he grew quite talkative, and told me something of his former life. Said he: “I

was born in a stable that stood in the rear of some stores, and we never had a mistress like you have. Our master was very kind to his horse Jessie, and he seemed to enjoy having us cats around after we got old enough to play. But the old stable was so infested with fleas, we never had a moment's peace; and my poor mother became thin and gaunt trying to keep herself and us looking respectable. That bath last night, I dreaded it at first; but when I saw those fleas floating around in the suds I thought I ought to be able to stand it for their sakes. If my mother could have a bath like that and a brushing, and then lie down peacefully on our clean soft pad, it would be bliss unheard of to her. But she will never leave that dirty old stable so long as she and Jessie can share it together, and indeed I don't think she could have a more devoted friend; for many a cold night did we sleep in Jessie's stall cuddled close up to her warm, sleek body. Near our stable was a big hotel where our mother got daily many choice bits of meat and fish, and this is how she made her living and raised her kittens; and I tell you it was pretty hard work for her to carry enough food for so many hungry little mouths."

"How many were there of you?" said I.

“Six,” said Billee, “beside our dear mother, who always gave us the best she had of everything.”

On the very same evening that mistress brought the little kittens home, curiously enough we had another new arrival, a Maltese cat with white markings. She came up the sidewalk in front of our house crying as if in great distress. Mistress invited her into the house to have some supper, but it was evident that hunger was not the cause of her crying, for she did not touch a morsel of food. When mistress examined her more closely, she found to her horror that the poor thing's breasts were greatly swollen, and that evidently, some one had robbed her of her kittens. Then mistress picked up the two little new kittens, and laid them on the pad by the old cat; and instantly the little things began to nurse her, and were soon purring a happy song of thankfulness. The “stepmother,” as mistress called the strange cat, washed each kitten in true mother fashion, and for several days enjoyed real mother bliss.

All this was very nice for the “stepmother,” but it proved disastrous to the kittens, for both took sick and died. After that mistress rubbed the old

cat's breasts daily with spirits of camphor, and in a few days she seemed to be all right.

I asked the "stepmother" one day how she came to leave home at such a critical time, and she unburdened to me a tale of cruelty and abuse that is almost beyond belief. She said that there being no other place provided, her kittens were born in the laundry basket, and that on the next morning when they were discovered, the lady ruthlessly dumped them out on the bare stone floor and ordered her son to come and drown them. "So my poor babies were dropped into a bucket of cold water right before my eyes," said she, "and I was powerless to save them."

"Pray, who are these people," said I, "that treated you in this manner?"

"Their name is Morton," said she, "and Will was the one that did the deed; but he is not to blame. I remember years ago when he was a most tender-hearted little fellow, and full of sympathy toward the suffering. I shall never forget one bitter cold day when a kitten followed him home from school and he carried it into the house and begged to be allowed to keep it. His mother let it remain till Will's bedtime arrived, when she compelled him to

put it outdoors, where it cried bitterly for hours ; and the next morning it was found on the doorstep, frozen to death. And now that same mother wonders why her son is so hard-hearted and brutal toward her."

" I've heard of the Mortons before," said I, " and I don't blame you for leaving them. But you are in good hands now—don't fear."

So the "stepmother" remained with us a few days longer, and then she was taken by mistress to a beautiful home, where they wanted a cat to live in the stable with the coachman.

One cold day last winter, there strayed into our basement two strange cats, both tigers, but very unlike each other. One was sleek looking, full grown with beautiful, large eyes, and very confiding in manner. The other was a shy, timid, shrinking little creature, afraid of everybody, and yet hunger evidently had driven her to seek help at our door. Her coat was so rough and dirty, it was difficult to tell what its real color was, and one eye was completely gone from its socket. She was indeed a pitiable sight, and I dare say very few people would have allowed her to enter their door. Mistress prepared her a plate of salmon, and the moment

she smelled the odor, she began to dance around as if she could hardly wait till it was ready. When at last the plate was handed down to her she stepped into it with both paws, and ate as greedily as any dog I ever saw. Mistress let her have the dish all to herself, and fed the rest of us from a different plate.

As soon as the poor creature's hunger was appeased, without stopping to wash, she went into a dark corner behind the cook-stove and lay down to rest. While she thus lay there, mistress said to Bettie, "It seems to me the kindest thing we can do to this poor creature is to gently put her to sleep and end her troubles."

"I think so, too," said Bettie; "no one would care to have such an unsightly animal around the house. She will never be anything but a hapless vagabond, to whom death would be a blessing."

But after all the little stranger was allowed to spend a few days of real happiness, and when one morning we missed her, we knew that she had gone to her long resting-place and was saved from further sorrow.

As to the big cat, mistress said she felt sure that she must be somebody's pet, and she told Bettie not to let her out under any circumstances.

Several days afterward Budge told me that during the first night of the big cat's stay with us she confided to him that her reason for leaving her home was the fact that a new housekeeper who had lately come, had just made her life unendurable; and that in utter despair she had wandered away not knowing whither to go.

The very next day after the stranger arrived she became the mother of five kittens. I dread to think what would have become of the poor thing and her helpless babies on that cold winter night, if mistress hadn't allowed her to stay. But no doubt the kind Providence directed her safely to our door.

A day or two after the little kittens came, there was a notice in the newspaper: "Lost, strayed or stolen, a full grown tiger cat. Leave at 'The Elms' and get reward." When mistress saw it she sent word to "The Elms" and they sent the coachman, who identified the cat and took her and her kittens home, wrapped up in a Buffalo robe and tucked in a laundry basket which he had brought in the coupé. The people at "The Elms" were so grateful to mistress for sheltering their pet that they sent her a basket of beautiful flowers.

Of course, it is not to be expected that every lady

will turn her house into an asylum for stray cats ; but I have often heard mistress say, and so I believe it is true, that many parents would have less cause to mourn over selfishness and ingratitude in their children if they would set a more generous and unselfish example before them in their own treatment of dumb and helpless creatures.

XXXII

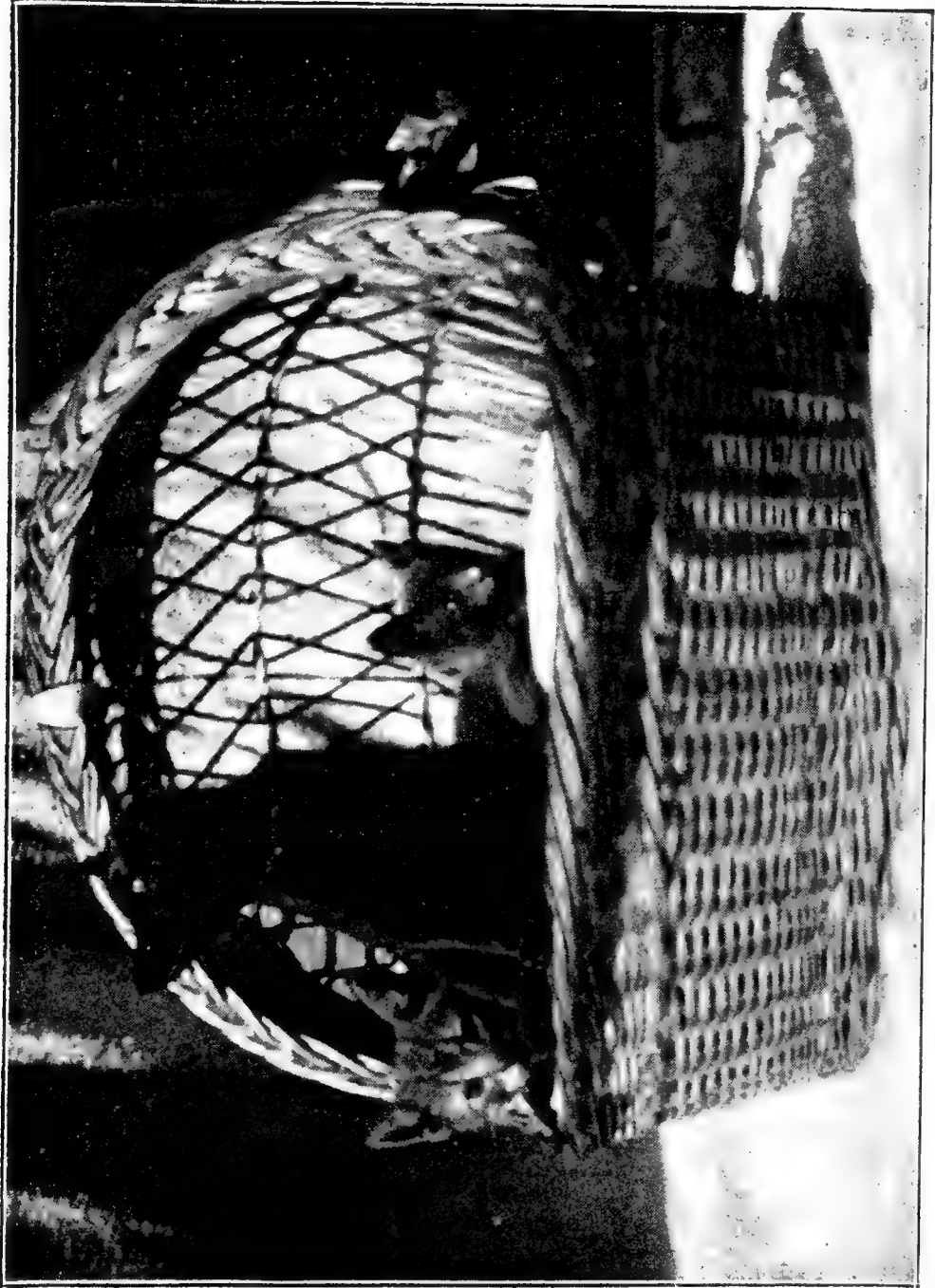
A KITTIE PARTY

WHEN my kittens were of the proper age mistress proposed they should have a chance to see all their little friends, so we sent out invitations like this :

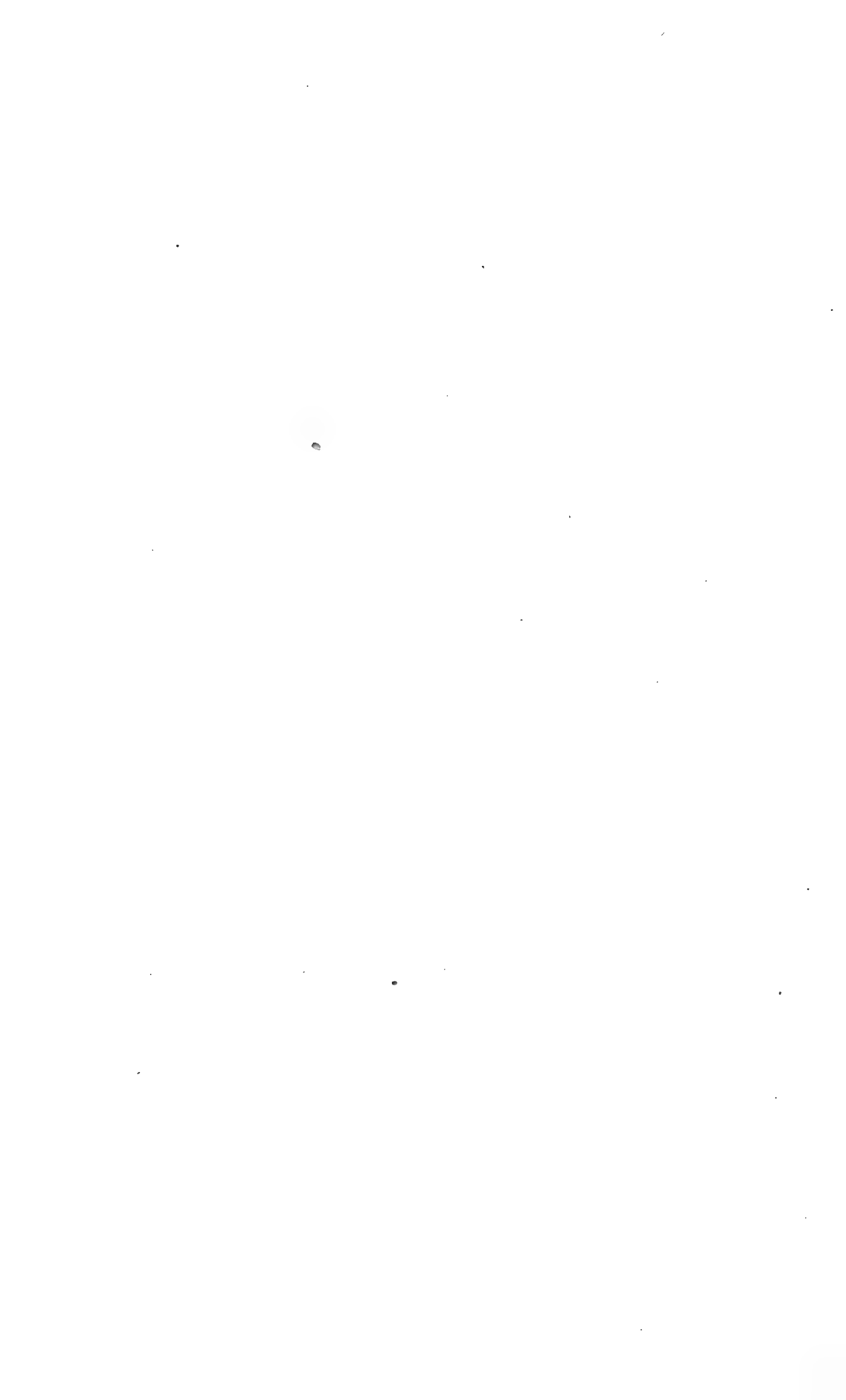
“ Meow will give a coming-out party on Saturday next from two till six, to her kittens Hiddigeigei, Lady Jane Grey and Patsy, assisted by Booker T. Washington, Mollie Scott, Budge and Goldie.”

The happy day came at last, sunshiny and bright, as if it had been made expressly for our party, and at the appointed hour came also our little guests. There were Marjory, Winifred, George and Doris, and my new friends Frances, Arline, Earl, Lillian and Burt. These, with Booker, Goldie, Budge, myself and the kittens, made just sixteen in all.

Mollie Scott was also invited, but she did not come. After it was all over she called and excused herself, saying she had never attended a party, and didn't know just how it would be ; but that she had spent most of the afternoon on the back fence,



HIDDIGEIGEI, PATSY AND LADY JANE GREY



taking note of what was going on, and that she thought another time she would venture to try it. Said I, "The way to learn to do a thing is to do it, and you have probably missed the chance of your life."

At this Mollie gave me a very solemn look, and as she turned to go I heard her mutter something to herself about "no use crying over spilled milk."

But to return to the party. Each of us big cats wore a wide ribbon sash with a big bow tied at the back, but the little kittens wore narrow ribbons tied around their necks. Goldie wore white, Booker crimson, Budge blue, and I orange; and the kittens wore blue except Hiddigeigei who wore pink. Our basket, handsomely decorated with fresh ribbon, was placed in a sheltered corner of the library, and let me assure you that we cats looked every bit as festive and gay as did our guests.

For a while the children wanted to do nothing else but play with the kittens, and I was only sorry that I did not have enough to go around. I never saw children handle kittens so carefully; no mauling, no squeezing; they just laid them on their breasts or on their laps, and stroked their backs and scratched their heads and chins, as if they all knew

just how kittens like to be treated. I half suspect that mistress took them aside and showed them how.

The kittens enjoyed the party much more than we older ones. Budge—poor, timid, bashful Budge—he never did like a crowd. When he saw such a troop of children come in, he made for the basement, where he remained in hiding behind the laundry stove till mistress brought him up and put him on top of the high bookcase; and there he seemed to feel secure, for none of the children could reach him. Booker and Goldie spent most of the afternoon in hiding under the couch.

When my kittens had been played with long enough, I went into my basket, and mistress understood just what I meant by it.

“Children,” said she, “you see the kittens’ mother thinks her babies have had enough play for the present, and she has gone to her basket to invite them to come to her to have some dinner and to take a nap. Now set all the kittens down on the floor and see what they will do.”

When my kittens were set free I began crooning to them, and oh, how it pleased the children to see the little things stand still a second, prick up their

ears, and then run as one man in the direction of the sound that a tired kitten loves so well to hear.

In less time than it takes to tell it, the three were gathered at my breast and in another minute they were purring contentedly, and Booker, dear thoughtful child, stood guard in front of the basket.

Then some of the children sang beautiful songs about kittens and birds, and Miss Wallace accompanied them on the piano. I liked Lillian's song best of all; I will tell you the words of it:

"A homeless little kitten
Came to my door one day,
'I'm cold and starved, please let me in!'
Its sad cries seemed to say.
I took it up and shut the door
Upon the bitter storm,
And put the little shiv'ring thing
Before the fire to warm.

"I gave it milk to drink, and smoothed
Its pretty, soft gray fur.
'Poor Pussy, stay with me,' I said.
It answered with a purr.
And ever since that winter day
I have so happy been;
I gained a merry playmate when
I let my pussy in."

When this song was finished they started a game of Puss in the Corner, and they were just in the

midst of it when the great Swiss cow bell rang, inviting the guests to luncheon. Then the children were formed into line with mistress and Burt at the head, and off they marched toward the dining-room to the tune of "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

Several ladies assisted mistress with serving. The table was decorated with daffodils, and indeed daffodils were conspicuous all over the house. At each plate stood a little red basket filled with candy to take home.

When my kittens were all fast asleep I too went to the dining-room, and those happy faces were indeed a lovely sight. The children were just having their ice cream and cake, and one of the ladies was playing a soft, sweet air on the piano.

"This table-cloth is cleaner than ours," said a voice as I entered, and at this the ladies all smiled at each other.

"This is starshine candy," said Marjory.

"No, it's moonshine drops," said Arline.

The fact is, it was sunshine chips, as I heard mistress tell Bettie when the groceries came.

"How old is your little brother?" said Lillian to Doris.

“He is three months and six years,” said Doris.

“My little brother came on the 4th of July,” said Frances. “Papa bought him instead of fireworks.”

The ladies smiled some more.

“Our little brother is only two days old,” said Lillian.

“I bet if my papa had known about it, he would have bought him before your papa got him,” said Winifred.

At this the ladies all smiled again.

When luncheon was over, Frances engaged the attention of both old and young by her skill as a climber and slider, and it seems to me that twelve successful slides down the balustrade ought to have been enough for her, but, no, she wanted more, and in the thirteenth slide—biff, bang—down she went. But fortunately she landed on the couch, so that she escaped with only a bruise on her knee, which mistress quickly covered with court-plaster. But in descending, one of her heels struck Earl in the stomach and knocked him against the wall, so that he got a big bump on the back of his head.

Poor Earl tried hard not to cry, but the tears just oozed out in spite of him. Mistress sent word to

Mrs. Wallace, his grandmamma, and in a few minutes she appeared with a remedy, and attended to the sore place in such an efficient way as only grandmammamas know how.

Booker turned the queerest somersaults, sideways, frontward and backward trying to get his sash off, and Goldie and he engaged in several pugilistic encounters to the great delight and amusement of the children.

Finally I thought I'd show them what I could do, so I jumped on the piano and played a tune for them. At this Budge took courage. He jumped off the bookcase where he had been stowed away, and joined me on the piano and we played a duet, the like of which has never been heard on land or sea.

While we were still playing, a gentleman came with a big square box which he opened up and set upon a very high three-legged stool. Then he had mistress sit in front of it and the children all around her. The curtains were drawn, and the room was darkened, when, whiz—something blew up and made an awful flash, and everybody said "ah," except poor little Burt; he said, "ouch," and began to cry. Some of the stuff from the "flash"

had blown toward him and burned his hand so that it became very red and blistered. Mrs. Gasney rushed across to her house to get some soothing oil that was said to be the best thing in the world for burns, and Burt's hand was bandaged up.

It began to look by this time as though the whole party would have to be sent home in an ambulance ; but the arrival of Don told us that it was getting close unto six o'clock, for he had come to take Winifred home ; and in a few minutes all the children, quite unwillingly, began to make ready for their departure.

As they bade us good-bye, they all said that they had had a very nice time, and mistress pinned on the breast of each child one of those beautiful daffodils ; and so ended our party.

Here endeth also my story.

May the dear, kind Providence bless and keep you all.

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