

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1896.

BUT THE CAT CAME BACK.

THOUGH MR. STRANGE TRIED TO GET RID OF HIS FRIEND.

He Made her Acquaintance at a Seaside Resort—How They Became Fast Friends—His Vain Efforts to Find a Home for the Cat in This City.

Did you ever try to get rid of a cat, I don't mean an ordinary cat of the barn-door and back-fence variety, but a valued and respected friend belonging to the feline race, for whom you were desirous of obtaining a temporary home in a christian family, where she would be treated with unvarying kindness; and for whom the advantages of refined and congenial society were more an object than any pecuniary consideration—as the advertisements say? If not, then you have been spared an experience which might well go a long way towards warping the kindest nature, and shaking your faith in the disinterestedness of human kindness. I have gone through it myself, and I speak with great feeling on the subject.

I am fond of cats and I am not at all ashamed to confess it, since most of the great men of the world, whose names even now resound through the corridors of time, have owned to a fondness for the graceful little 'domestic tiger.'

The immortal Italian poet Petrarch loved his favorite cat so dearly that he had it embalmed when it died, and we all know that embalming was an expensive process in those days. Rousseau was so attached to his cat that he shed genuine tears over its loss. Dr. Johnson the great scholar who was also called the 'Great Bear' was so fond of his cat 'Hodge' that he not only wrote a poem in his honor, but nursed him day and night when he was ill, and went out himself to choose oysters that he might tempt poor Hodge's failing appetite. Southey, the gentle poet laureate of England raised one of his cats to the peerage under the magnificent title of 'Earl of Tomlinagne, Baron Raticide Waowhler and Skaratchi' and the great Dante was never satisfied unless his favorite cat was seated on his desk when he was writing. So it is not to be wondered at that I am quite satisfied to be found in such illustrious company, and confess to a similarity of sentiment with these master minds.

To come back to the present day however, and the heroine of this sketch—I made her acquaintance during a sojourn by the sea last summer and the high opinion we formed of each other almost at our first meeting, soon ripened into a warm and lasting friendship. We boarded in the same house, that is to say I boarded there, and the cat was an unpaid retainer, a sort of hanger on, who, like many other faithful servants, and noble characters was totally unappreciated in the circle she adorned. We soon discovered that we had so much in common, and the companionship of each was so much to the other that my friend spent most of her time in my apartments. I think she knew she was appreciated there, and she had that love of appreciation which is characteristic of all sensitive and refined natures. During the summer she became a mother, as even the most refined and spiritual minded of feline matrons will, and my interest in her offspring still further cemented the already strong bonds of union between us. She brought up the solitary kitten which was spared to her in a manner which increased my respect for her and fulfilled her maternal duties with a zeal which might have served as an example to many human parents. Consequently the kitten was soon just as much at home, and just as welcome in my room, as her mother. One day towards the close of the summer when I was thinking of winging my homeward way, my landlord chanced to come into my sitting room, and as usual the mother and daughter were reposing peacefully in one of his best chairs.

"Huh!" he remarked, as his eye rested on the peaceful scene. "You've spoiled that cat Mr. Strange; I am thinking she will miss when you are gone, for I am sure I don't know what I am going to do with her when I close up for the summer. I took her with the house, and I think I will just knock her brains out and be done with it!"

Knock out the brains of my pretty, gentle friend who had been the companion of my a lonely hour during the summer, and leave her little one to the bitter mercies of a world which has ever been hostile to all the feline race? The idea was abhorrent, and on the impulse of the moment I said 'Will you give her to me?'

"Oh yes I'll give her to you fast enough if you want her, he answered readily, 'But I should like to know what you are going to do with her after you've got her, that's all?'

That was a practical question which I asked myself later and found some difficulty in answering, but I did not think of it then.

Not long after I packed up all my belongings and turned my face home—I mean St. John—wards. A commodious

basket was provided my new acquisition and her baby, and she came very willingly, seeming to have few regrets in leaving her native place.

The greater part of our journey was by boat, and my cat and kitten gave me so little trouble that it was not until I reached the city and put up at my favorite hotel that I realized exactly what I had taken upon myself and that a hotel was scarcely the place in which to domesticate a perfectly strange cat and kitten. I belonged then, alas! to the nomadic and wandering tribes who had no home, and abode in boarding houses; and my first task would be to hunt up a desirable boarding place for the winter. But meanwhile it was impossible for me to leave my domestic animals in my room at the hotel, so they must be provided with at least a temporary home. I thought of a kind friend who lived a little out of town and who was kindhearted and I hoped, easily imposed upon. So as soon as we had our dinner, I packed my charges up in a roomy black bag I possessed and started bravely out to seek their fortune. I never knew before how heavy an ordinary sized cat, and one small kitten could be, and they grew wearier every moment. I had to leave the bag open a crack, so as to prevent them from suffocating, and to keep a watchful eye upon the opening lest maternal-familias, should escape; and by the time I reached my friend's house I was not only thoroughly tired out, but I was beginning to realize that I cut rather a ridiculous figure. I toiled bravely up the steps however, and rung the bell with what confidence could I summon.

Mrs. Blank was out of town, the maid said, and was not expected home for ten days at least! I tried to look as if I was merely carrying the bag for exercise, and got down the steps with as much grace as compatible with extreme haste. Matters were getting desperate, and in my extremity I thought of an acquaintance near by who was fond of animals, and who I felt sure would help me out of my dilemma; so I trudged round to her abode with a heart which was growing almost as heavy as the cat.

She was delighted to see me and expressed great interest in the fate of my interesting pets, but unfortunately she had four cats of her own, and to take two more into the house really seemed out of the question. So I took my leave, a sadder and a wiser man, and wended my way back to the hotel, to rest a while and think matters over.

I wish my worst enemy could have seen me sneaking back with that black bag held laboriously and carefully at arm's length, and heard the tremulous half frightened, half puzzled wail which issued from it now and then, as the patient occupant grew tired of soothing her baby, and trying to find a comfortable position; because I am sure if he had, his heart would have softened towards me, especially when he noted my efforts, to appear unconscious of the sounds, and the curious glances they attracted from the passers by.

Arrived at the hotel once more, I sidled in by the ladies entrance, and when I had gained the cool shelter of my room I released the prisoners and thought steadily for some time. The result was that I remembered one more friend on whose kind offices I hoped faintly I could depend; she lived out beyond the suspension bridge, and as her home was almost in the country it seemed to me she could surely find some nook or corner to shelter my proteges for a day or two. So I went for a hack, packed up the victims once more and started out again. Telling the man to wait I took up my burden bravely and stepped jingly up to the door. Thank heaven my friend was at home, and better still she was deeply interested in the tale of woe I unfolded; so much so indeed, that I felt my troubles were over, and I had taken the right course at last. She made me open the tateful bag and, show her the cat and kitten she admired both, and waxed eloquent over the latter's big eyes and funny little Roman nose, and just as I was about to close the bag with a joyful snap, and express my heartfelt gratitude, she said nothing would give her greater pleasure than to take care of the dear little things for any time I chose to leave them, but—unfortunately she had a servant who disliked cats so much that it was useless for her to try to keep one herself, and she was afraid the poor little things would not be well treated!!! I knew that my friend was perfectly sincere, but I also knew that her dread of losing that servant of hers made life a burden, and I untasted my bag without another word, crowded the occupants in and departed. We got back again the cats and I, to our own haven of refuge, the hotel; and if I had been determined to keep them with me before, I was ten times more determined now, after all I had suffered for their sakes.

I won't describe the events of the next two days in detail, the recital would be too harrowing, and I don't like to think even

now of what I paid the chambermaid for looking after those too blessed cats, and keeping their presence in the house a secret.

It took me quite two days to find a boarding house where they did not object to taking a respectable single man and two well brought up cats to board, but at last I succeeded and we settled down comfortably. In due time I found a home for the Roman-nosed kitten where she was loved and appreciated as she deserved; but the mother is still the joy of my home and the pet of my family. Where I go she will go also, until she leaves me of her own accord, or is called away to the happy hunting grounds where good cats bask in golden sunshine all day long, when they are not chasing luscious mice or attending to their domestic duties. It is going to be a case of Ruth and Naomi, for never again, while I retain possession of my senses will I enact the role of cat peddler, or strive to farm out the most desirable of felines. I learned a valuable, if bitter lesson during those hours of anguish when I tramped the stony streets of St. John with my cat laden bag, and it was that cats are a good deal like babies and tooth brushes—we value our own, but have no use for those belonging to other people even for a very short time.

WAYS OF A PET BADGER.

A Somewhat Rare Animal Brought Up Under Close Observation.

George found our badger, nearly two years ago, at the bottom of a ravine one day while out hunting. Apparently the little thing had fallen over the cliff, but landing in a soft bed of dead leaves had not been hurt. A queer, flat, furry creature he was, with a gray coat beautifully striped with pure white from near the tip of his nose to the middle of his back, where the stripe broke, to begin again a little further down and continue to the base of his stubby tail.

There were other white stripes from his dainty black nose back to his ears; his feet were black and armed with claws that even then looked formidable, and his eyes were fast shut, and there was not a tooth in his little mouth that opened feebly and emitted a faint cry when George picked him up. The little thing was almost flat, with the queerest legs—surely the shortest and most comical of any animal.

George dropped the baby badger into a pocket of his shooting jacket, and comforted by the warmth and darkness it at once went fast asleep.

There was quite a sensation when the baby badger was introduced into the family circle. Midnight the cat at once betook herself out of doors and up a tree: Naylor and Poney, the beagles, retired growling; and even Ben and Bonnie, the two Irish setters, circled gingerly around the stranger, making feints and then retiring, as though experience with this kind had taught them to be wary.

None of the human members of the family knew what the creature was. Its like had not been seen by any one in the vicinity before, and there was a good deal of speculation as to what it might be.

'It can't hurt any one now, that's certain,' said Grandmother Storm, 'for it has no teeth.'

'Whatever 'tis, it's too beautiful to be killed,' was Grandfather Storm's verdict; and George was eager to raise it.

A nursing-bottle was procured and the queer baby took to it readily. In a few days the bright little eyes opened, and white dots of teeth began to appear in the small mouth.

'That is a badger,' said a mighty hunter from up the canon, who came down to see the unknown beast. 'I haven't seen one about here in years. They never were very common.'

Sure enough, the little fellow proved to be a very lively specimen of a rare species of the badger kind, Meles labradorica, seldom seen outside of California and Texas, and not now common in either of these States.

Having plenty of good Jersey milk, 'Badge' waxed fat and became as mischievous as any monkey. Fond of society and playful as a kitten, he was constantly under foot. His unexpected appearances in sitting room or parlor, when he was supposed to be securely excluded from the house, alarmed more than one visitor.

'He looks like an animated door mat,' one said, and the description was not inapt. Whoever tried that mat, however, would receive a queer scolding. Badge's voice is like that of a very young, crying baby, but a baby with the lunge of a Sandow. When 'he tuns up' it is as though a hundred pins were pricking that baby all at once. Sometimes, if very angry, Badge will squeal like a pig, and then, although he has never but once attacked any

one, it is deemed discreet to leave him unmolested. He is really the best natured of creatures, albeit an inveterate tease. A favorite trick of his is to secure a certain rubber ball, the cherished property of Bess, a young fox terrier, and worry it until its owner comes to the rescue.



Manchester Robertson & Allison, St. John

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Quick and eager Bess is more than a match for the badger, who is as yet no fighter, and can only manage to retain the ball by stratagem. He will tuck his queer little head between his forepaws and roll himself into a hard compact furry ball. It is too heavy for Bess to move, and the long, thick, shining hair is as good as a coat of mail against her teeth, so she can do nothing but dance barking around it, in an ecstasy of impotent fury, until Badge may chance to show his nose.

Then—presto! Bess has him by the head, shaking him until he is glad to drop his booty and beat a retreat, which he usually does backward, for he can run almost as well backward as forward. His hind legs are shorter, if possible, than his fore legs, but this makes no difference in his getting about.

Badge is so fat that it is impossible to feel his bones, and, watching his movements, one is tempted to believe he has none. When he sees a distant object that takes his fancy, instead of running toward it he will run over and over, with astounding rapidity, until he reaches it. He will also do this at the word of command; and the sight is worth witnessing, for one would almost as readily expect a platter to roll over as Badge's flat body.

I have seen him lie flat on his back, then raise himself to an upright position for a moment, apparently standing on his stump of a tail, and then drop on all fours without so much as winking, though he weighs fully thirty-five pounds.

The creature's strength is amazing. He is scarcely two feet long, but he shoves with ease a heavy, solidly packed Saratoga trunk whose weight is a load for two men. In like manner he once moved the heavy kitchen range from its corner to the middle of the floor.

He is not to be trusted alone near the stove, for it is his greatest delight to open the door and rake, with his long claws, all the ashes and coals out upon the floor. Were he a fighter he would be a terrible foe, for his claws are three or four inches long, while his teeth are sharp and strong. He has a grip of the jaw that is more to be dreaded than that of the bulldog.

He owes this grip to a peculiar formation of the jaw, in which the badger differs from all the other mammals. The lower jaw is jointed with the upper by a transverse knuckle of bone that locks firmly into a long cavity in the skull, so that it is almost impossible to dislocate the jaw. With his sharp teeth Badge can bite clean through a good-sized bone.

Badge is a model housekeeper in his way. He is very fond of cherries, nibbling the food daintily and rejecting the pit. When he has finished eating the cherries he carefully carries the pits to a knothole in the floor of the porch and drops them through it to the ground.

Every morning when he gets up he carries his bed out of his little house, shakes it thoroughly, and throws it over the boards that fence him in. At night he always carries it back, but through the day it gets thoroughly aired.

He holds his food in his 'hands' and is very gentlemanly indeed in his table manners. Nor could any fine gentleman be any more particular as to his diet. He is fond of game, and has to be rigorously

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kept from the chicken yard. He is particularly fond of squirrels, and always expects George to bring him one when he goes out with his gun. If the squirrel is not forthcoming a scolding is sure to be.

Milk toast is a favorite luxury with him as are most fruits, for the badger is both carnivorous and graminivorous. One morning, standing by the kitchen stove, he daintily ate nine buckwheat cakes, but could never again be persuaded to taste one.

Grandmother Storm is the only one who ventures to correct the badger for his mischievous acts. No one else would dare strike him; but she spansks him ignominiously when his misdeeds are flagrant. He always stands perfectly still and takes his chastisement, grunting in the funniest fashion at every blow, and the ordeal over usually offers to kiss and make up.

Badge does not seem to be in the least treacherous. Any ill treatment awakens him prompt resentment, and the offender will do well to retire for the time being; but he is peaceable and forgiving and rarely holds resentment. When strangers appear he will shake hands sociably, and is always glad of company.—Youth's Companion.

IN THE GERMAN ARMY.

The Cruel Conduct of the Officers, is Causing Much Comment.

The brutality of German officers and soldiers toward civilians is causing considerable talk in Germany, says the Baltimore American. The overbearing conduct of the officers has gone so far that a lieutenant killed a man at Karlsruhe recently on account of a comparatively trifling act. The newspapers in the empire have taken the matter up, and some unpleasant exposures have been made. All sorts of high-handed and criminal proceedings have been brought to light. The higher officers have been compelled to issue orders to curb their subordinates. It is probable that the Emperor may take a hand in the matter.

Germany's army is a fine fighting machine. All the world is willing to give it praise for its capacity to do what may be required of it in time of war. The fact that over four hundred thousand men are taken out of the fifty millions of people and trained for a specific purpose sets up a contrast before the people and encourages a tendency to regard these men as better than citizens in general. A military nation, in its system of education, teaches the people to look to the army as the means of preservation for the nation, and this lesson has the effect of creating the idea among the rank and file of the people that the army is superior to the rest of the population. Parades, drills and all the practice and show attaching to the conduct of standing armies have the effect of establishing differences. The officers, from the highest to the lowest, in a country like Germany are apt to give encouragement to this idea of separation and fancied superiority in public, in places like restaurants and on trains, becomes almost a part of army discipline. It is easy to see therefore, how the military part of the population should take liberties with civilians and be led to resent anything like opposition to their acts. It used to be said that army officers, and even privates, acted on the Unter den Linden in Berlin as if

they owned the city. Civilians were compelled to get out of their way or run the risk of being injured.

A ludicrous state of affairs was reported not long ago in that city, when, it is said, soldiers had been flogged by Socialists for not properly behaving themselves in public.

It is not a healthy sign of progress, even in a strong military nation like Germany, that the gap between soldiers and civilians is becoming wider, especially when the separation is being brought about by the soldiers. Germany has enemies on all sides, and she will need for her preservation the closest union among all classes of her people. It is not likely that the Emperor will take any risks in a matter of this kind. He has punished his officers, some of them severely, and will not hesitate to do so again. The Socialists and others, who are always ready to agitate anything that will worry the authorities, will be apt to make all the capital possible out of the smallest, as well as the greatest, quarrel.

MUSIC AND MICE.

A Suggestion of a Novel Trap—Effect of Piano Playing on Rodents.

Truth of London suggests that as mice like music there is an independent fortune awaiting the man who will invent a small music box which when wound will run at night, since such a contrivance would serve to call mice into traps and would be to the mice what a decoy is to a flock of ducks or a looking glass to a tiger. After this suggestion, which is not untrue to nature, Truth went on to say that music that sounds out of kilter to the critic's ears would also drive mice from the house. If the Truth writer had even actually seen a mouse under the influence of music he would never have made that mistake. Neither would he of said 'an accordion would also make the agile rodent desert the house as he is said to desert the sinking ship.' Whether music affects rats is a question not yet settled by students of natural history.

As to the actual doings of a mouse when listening to music it has been observed that the playing of a piano, even the tum-tum of a beginner learning his first tune, will cause mice of the common house variety to run up and down behind the plaster of a house, causing it to rattle in a way fit to disturb the most earnest student. One night half a dozen persons were gathered in the parlor of an Adirondack home, listening to a skilled player, who, as a woodsman said, 'could make a pianer talk,' when it was observed that the mice were acting in an unusual manner. The ordinary conduct of mice when they hear piano music is to merely rattle the plaster, but on this night they squeaked and squealed and rattled the plaster as they had never done before. The rush of the rodents died away after the music stopped, but it was hours before the last squeak was heard.

One of the human listeners was a boy who had some little skill as a harmonica player, and he went frequently to the woods, where, with the aid of the instrument, he succeeded in calling chipmunks, red squirrels, and, on one occasion, a woodchuck, besides wood mice—including the deer mouse—and the smallest birds. The mice chiefly ran about the player with now and then a squeak, but sometimes a low strain with slight modulations would seem to drive them insane, and then, without hesitation, they would run over the player, as if he had been a stump. The squirrels were less demonstrative.

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