

MUCH against my will, I give this testimony. I am one of those who echo with gusto the cry that some ancient Egyptian uttered when his lady love made him kiss the kitty's ears—"I hate cats!" I belong to the ancient and honourable order of cat-haters. Whenever I hear a man say: "Damn the cat!" while the cat, having squawked, scoots down the cellar stairs to brood on her woes and take 'em out on some unhappy cheese-eater, I say to myself: There stands a man and a brother. And if I see our hostess, guardian of the said cat, cast a blighting glance in my ally's direction, as who should say "Broot," I subconsciously, even consciously, rally to his defence.

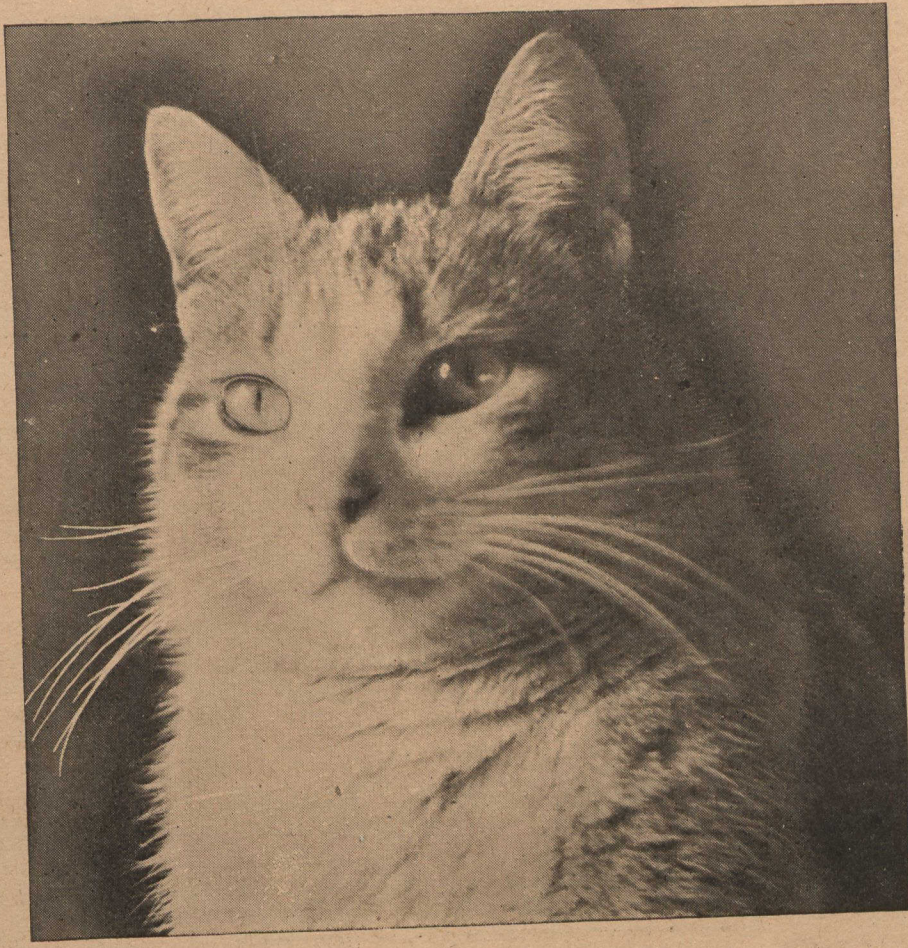
A Free-trader with a hare-lip and ruby ring once rode seven miles in a one-lung taxi with me, without any untoward incident. Free Trade, mangled accents, and ruby ring were all forgotten in the light of our peculiar antipathy. When we reached the end of that journey we asked the chauffeur if he had ever by any chance run over a cat, to which he replied that he had killed dogs, hens, bike-riding curates and even birds of the wing, but never a cat. He had lived, it seemed, in vain being another of us cat-haters. So we bought him a cheese sandwich in a pub.—it was in London, after the anti-treating orders were issued—and parted with emotion.

I should say, too, before going on with my unwilling evidence on behalf of these creatures, that I have had considerable experience of them. There is a legend in our family of my great-uncle George's eleventh child being killed in its cradle by a velvety vampire that "sucked its breath." I have never been very clear in my mind just how the cat in that case did the trick, or just what real loss the world sustains by the other relatives bequeathed me by George. But it was a horrible story, a suggestion, and my grandmother used stormy nights to divert our childish minds, more, I once owned a cat called "Tom" himself—having mislaid his other cat happily—by leaping headlong into a wall that was too small for him, though enough ample for the retreating mouse.

I HAVE stroked hostesses' cats and submitted to be smeared with cat-fur. I have projected tooth-brush holders and empty hair-tonic bottles from the window of my bed-room into the night below. I have attended the obsequies of unwanted kittens for whom no doubt Sir J. M. Barrie will also provide a paradise; and I have spent years of an otherwise unsporting life, hoping to see a real cat-fight, a form of competition which, if cats were not so delicate about these little affairs of honour, so skilled in choosing out-of-the-way places and unexpected moments, would doubtless put cock-fighting, bull-fighting, dog-fighting and ecclesiastical argument forever out of favour with the masses. Indeed, I have seen one such fight—a charming affair, brilliant in technique, very fast, and marked by a really good oratorical accompaniment. Yet in a few thrilling seconds it was over—a sort of Peace without Victory, I judge—and our cat came slithering up the side-verandah steps with a disordered countenance and scalloped ears. That, I may say, was the first thing that ever made me think a kind thought of a cat—not that it was VERY kind. For real ginger it had been an incomparable exhibition, and then, the way OUR cat declined all offers of repair, the manly way he avoided capture and demanded access to his gloomy lair in the cellar, made him seem for half a moment a decent citizen. I like a man who, when he gets mad, stays mad, and refuses to smirk on his admirers and invite sympathy and praise. Our cat was that

But now I am pressed into the defence of the cat by an aunt who reads, somewhere or other, that the cats of the United States kill approximately thirty million birds a year. Why, says the writer to whom my aunt alludes, should this awful waste be allowed to continue? Why must our "feathered songsters"

The Cat is a much-abused animal. Boys put tar on his fur. Dogs worry him. Otherwise kind people neglect him. Now even the editor abuses him—Poor Pussy!



B Y O N E W H O H A T E S H I M

be forever menaced by the lurking cat? Why should the people of the United States and Canada tolerate this iniquity and waste? To which my aunt replies: What cat ever yet had a decent meal of a common sparrow? And if the cat is at times fool enough to waste a perfectly good morning getting ridges in his stomach by laying on a branch waiting to catch his hors d'oeuvres and get feathers on his tonsils—isn't it a good work? A work of supererrogation? Isn't the cat the only remaining member of modern society that at least pretends to keep up the early traditions of his kind? Though the dog has become a mere man-worshipper and the horse has forgotten the days when he fought for his wives, and the canary-bird gets sick at his stomach unless you are there to select his food for him—and though man himself had almost forgotten he was a barbarian until the Kaiser made a false step—the cat is still a hunter. Though sky-scrappers may push-in the face of the Heavens, and velvet cushions take the place of grass the primeval battle of the forest remains with us. There is still one living creature in this country that doesn't get his foot in machine made packages—the cat. He preserves for us the tradition of the days when every man on our street would have worn deerskin breeches and butchered his own venison up above Wells' Hill. In fact, the cat remains the only absolutely wild creature that civilization has left.

To the charge of killing thirty million birds a year let the cat plead guilty. The total may be more or less, but it is reasonably arrived at by computing that the twenty-five million cats on this continent kill a bird-and-one-twenty-fifth-of-a-bird per annum. Now, gentlemen of the jury, having "admitted the corn," allow me to plead extenuating circumstances! In the first place, nobody has missed the thirty million birds. There isn't a particle less noise in my eaves-trough in the mornings. The lettuce seed in my back yard garden last year was all murdered in the broad light of day by birds. Birds picked holes in the fruit in my solitary cherry tree apparently for no other reason than to see what was inside. The robins whipped the vast reaches of the sky with shameless love-making, and a wood-pecker, thinking he heard pine-ticks tunnelling under my eaves-trough, woke the whole house, morning after morning, trying to sink a counter-shift before 5 a.m., with what disaster

trous results to our sleeping may be imagined.

If, gentlemen of the jury, the cat is to be held to account for thirty million birds done away with, why should I not hold the birds to blame for all the lettuce salads I have missed. Why—now that I come to think of it—isn't there a society formed for the protection of angle worms? Do I see the ladies who have brought the present charge against the historic cat, rising in defence of the worm whose home is violated by the rapacious robin, and whose wife and family are plucked from their innocent walks in the forest of the grass—and no account rendered. And why not a society for the protection of little fishes from big fishes? And little business men from big business men. And the defenceless public against the machinations of editors?

AND consider the patience of the cat in his work! It has, I know, been hinted that an evil motive—hunger—is not an evil motive except on the part of wild beasts toward ourselves—undoubtedly the animosity of the cat toward birds; that there is, indeed, some professional jealousy in the matter of song. But that is trifling, and on the other hand the value of the cat's example in his stalking of his prey, is serious. Observe yonder grey tom-cat playful practising the art of seeming to sleep on a low limb of the cherry tree? How he slips off and falls and looks foolish and tries again? How day after day he leaps at the birds and the birds "do bank," as cousin Willie the aviator says, and elude their fate.

I have a notion that we might wade through the pattern parts of our lives after the manner of the cat. Dogs are forever minding other people's business. Cats, Dogs fall in love with their masters as much as gods, to be worshipped in poverty, sickness or health, drunk or sober—but you paralyze a cat's moral sense. It wastes its life. It won't get thin because you are getting fat. It will sally forth to do battle over already won territory. It refuses cans in the neighbourhood. It doesn't care whether you are sick or well, and if it is a member of the sobriety to which you lay claim, is less than a god to be, your cat only stares into the fire, and makes slits in her eyes with sensual delight, and thinks that at least herself is virtuous and contented. It's not all bad yet. Somewhere within she keeps a dream of contentment boiling and bubbling under the stock on the back of the kitchen stove. A dream of infinite exertion, quickness, precise and purposeful action. She is capable of the most complete relaxation. And as for the birds—are they not the cat, what ideas about gods and fairy-land and harps are to us clumsy creatures, and of another sphere?

What's in a Name?

By NORMAN RITCEY

MOST people do not know how or when the names originated, and what is more, they do not care. A sea captain relates how, in recent years, a man acquired a strange name in a strange way.

Some years ago a boy of about ten stowed self away on board a bark sailing from Liverpool for the East. Out of sight of land the following conversation took place between the mate and the

"Well, where are you from?"
 "Liverpool, sir."
 "What's your name?"
 "Paddy, sir."
 "Paddy what? What's your other name?"
 "Ain't got any, sir."
 "Where are your parents?"
 "Never had any, sir."

Here was a boy without a name, and a name must have. Well, the name of the ship "LaKemba." The boy was named LaKemba. heard of, he was boatswain on an ocean liner had married. A whole generation of LaKembas spring from that accident in a boy's life.