

Cat Tales From Down East

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

We have a neighbor over on the next road who keeps a cat, but it is a red one with one green eye and one blue one. This strange cat reminded me of the letter-to-the-editor in a recent issue of our hebdomadal which implored summer folks not to abandon their cats when they go back to the cities after Labor Day. The writer of this letter seemed to feel a cat is bereft whenever it ceases to be coddled.

The Siamese cat is not a likely Maine cat and would not appear at random as an everyday happenstance. It came from somewhere, and its being a Quaker cat must have been of its free choice. If abandoned, it seemed not abused.

Well, we had one cat that liked to jump on the dog and ride him up the road. This was hard on the dog and he would say so as he moved along. The cat always got off at the schoolhouse, but the dog would keep on going - often as far as Webster Corner. He (the dog) was on the stupid side and should never have offered his services, but that cat was cultured and refined, and never missed a chance to go to school. A winter in the city would not have appealed to her.

FULL TEXT

A LARGE and seemingly prosperous pussycat, with sleek foliage and a yank in his/her plumed tail, strolled into my dooryard this very morning. I spoke to him/her in a friendly tone as if I were fond of cats, whereupon he/she sneered at me and went under the blackberry bushes.

I do not know who belongs to this cat, but the thing is handsome and may well be a precious pet, dining on cates and dainties and reclining when fatigued on plush and velvet.

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As a longtime student of the household cat, I think this is not necessarily true, and I believe there are other things people might write to editors about. I am not taking a stand against cats. I have known some cats that like me, and I know there are people who like cats, so I plead a neutral interest to keep out of trouble.

Years ago in our early nuptial days, my wife and I used to ride over to the next town on Saturday afternoons and take supper with a pleasant couple who chanced to be my parents, and after an evening of cribbage we would ride home, passing the old brick Quaker Meeting House at about 10:30 each time. There, our automobile headlamps would shine on a magnificent Siamese cat that was stalking the churchyard in a posture of a preprandial pounce at a mouse.

The beast would look up as we drove past, and for some six years we saw it nearly every time. I would say, "Aha! Friend! Thee are a handsome puddytat!"

There was no habitation near that meeting house, and we assumed the cat was walking alone and this place was like all others; that the cat survived on its own resources and depended on no human largesse.

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abused.

We wondered. This was a cat of quality, that could walk up to any doorstep and be received warmly into any family. I became fond of that cat, and surmised it chose this remote situation rather than dine on caviar and sleep on a silk pillow. It had a message.

THROUGH our years on the farm we entertained many cats and more than a few of them preferred the rigors of the great outdoors to our effete style of family living. They just wouldn't come into the house.

We did, also, have cats that charged inside and grabbed anybody's favorite rocker and fought to keep it. I had cats that would rub my ankles all the way to the barn and tell me how happy they were, and we called them barn cats rather than house cats.

I do not condone, let alone encourage, abandoned cats when the jolly summer folks go back to Philadelphia. Certainly not. But it's more than possible some cats would have more fun here in Maine than down in Pennsylvania.

'Twas said that a cat may look on a king, but that is definitely a human's observation, and was promulgated without asking a responsible cat if he found any fun in it. It's possible cats find pleasure in ways man wots not of. Well, we had one cat that liked to jump on the dog and ride him up the road. This was hard on the dog and he would say so as he moved along. The cat always got off at the schoolhouse, but the dog would keep on going - often as far as Webster Corner. He (the dog) was on the stupid side and should never have offered his services, but that cat was cultured and refined, and never missed a chance to go to school. A winter in the city would not have appealed to her.

She was a money cat, and the children named her Charlie. Later, she was Charlene.

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