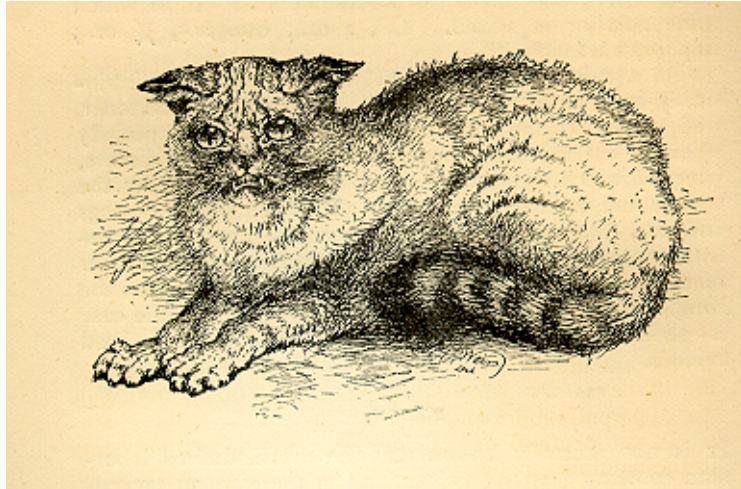


Our Cats and All About Them. Their Varieties, Habits and Management; and for Show, The Standards of Excellence and Beauty; Described and Pictured by Harrison Weir, F.R.H.S., "President of The National Cat Club" -Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889.

#### THE WILD CAT OF BRITAIN.



The wild cat is said to be now extinct in England, and only found in some of the northern parts of Scotland, or the rocky parts of the mountains, of the south, where I am informed it may yet occasionally be seen. The drawing I give above was made from one sent to the first Crystal Palace Cat Show in 1871, by the Duke of Sutherland, from Sutherlandshire. It was caught in a trap by the fore-leg, which was much injured, but not so as to prevent its moving with great alacrity, even with agility, endeavouring frequently to use the claws of both fore-feet with a desperate determination and amazing vigour. It was a very powerful animal, possessing great strength, taking size into consideration, and of extraordinary fierceness.

Mr. Wilson, the manager of the show, though, an excellent naturalist tried to get it out of the thick-barred, heavy-made travelling box in which it arrived, into one of the ordinary wire show-cages, thinking it would appear to better advantage; but in this endeavour he was unsuccessful, the animal resisting all attempts to expel it from the one into the other, making such frantic, and determined opposition that the idea was abandoned. This was most fortunate, for the wire cages then in use were afterwards found unequal to confining even the ordinary domestic cat, which, in more than one instance, forced the bars apart sufficiently to allow of escape. As it was, the wild cat maintained its position, sullenly retiring to one corner of the box, where it scowled, growled, and fought in a most fearful and courageous manner during the time of its exhibition, never once relaxing its savage watchfulness or attempts to injure even those who fed it. I never saw anything more unremittingly ferocious, nor apparently more untamable.

It was a grand animal, however, and most interesting to the naturalist, being, even then, scarcely ever seen; if so, only in districts far away and remote from the dwellings of civilisation. Yet I believe I saw one among the rocks of Bodsbeck, in Dumfriesshie, many years

ago, though of this I am not certain, as it was too far away for accurate observation before it turned and stood at bay, and on my advancing it disappeared. The animal shown at the Crystal Palace was very much lighter, in colour, and with less markings than those in the British Museum, the tail shorter, and the dark rings fewer, the lines on the body not much deeper in tint than the ground colour, excepting on the forehead and the inside of the fore-legs, which were darker, rather a light red round the mouth, and almost white on the chest-which appears to be usual with the wild cat; the eyes were yellow-tinted green, the tips of the ears, the lips, cushions of the feet, and a portion of the back part of the hind-legs, black; the markings were, in short, irregular thin lines, and in no way resembled those of the ordinary black-marked domestic tabby cat, possessing little , elegance of line- in character it was bolder, having a rugged sturdiness, being stronger and broader built, the fore-arms thick,. massive, and endowed with great power, with long, curved, claws, the feet were stout sinewy, and strong; altogether it was a very peculiar, interesting, and extraordinary animal. What became of it I never leaned.

In 1871 and 1872, a wild cat was exhibited at the Crystal Palace Cat Show, by the Earl of Hopetoun, aged three years, also some hybrid kittens, the father of which was a longhaired cat, the mother a sandy, by a wild cat out of a longhaired tabby, which proves, if proof were wanting, that such hybrids breed freely either with hybrids, the domestic, or the wild cat.

Mr. Frank Buckland also exhibited a hybrid between the wild and tame cat.

The Zoological Society, a pair of wild cats, which did not appear to be British.

In 1873, Mr. A. H. Senger sent a fine specimen of hybrid, between the domestic cat and Scotch wild cat.

An early description of the wild cat in England is to be found in an old book on Natural History, and copied into a work - on "Menageries," "Bartholomceus de Proprietatibus Rerum," which was translated into English by Thomas Berthlet, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde as early as 1498. There is a very interesting description of the cat, which gives nearly all the properties of the wild animal in an odd and very amusing way. It states : "He is most like to the leopard, and hath a great mouthe, and saw teeth and sharp, and long tongue, and pliant, thin, and subtle; and lappeth therewith when he drinketh, as other beasts do, that have the nether lip shorter than the over; for, by cause of unevenness of lips, such beasts suck not in drinking, but lap and lick, as Aristotle saith and Plinius also. And he is full lecherous beast in youth, swift, pliant, and merry, and leapeth, and riseth on all things that is tofore him; and is led by a straw, and playeth therewith, and is a right heavy beast in age, and full sleepy, and lieth slyly in wait for mice; and is ware where they bene more by smell than by sight, and hunteth and riseth on them in privy places; and when he taketh a mouse, he playeth therewith, and eateth him after the play; and is a cruel beast when he is wild, and dwelleth in woods, and hunteth there small wild beasts as conies and hares."

The next appears in John Bossewell's "Workes of Armorie," folio, A.D. 1597:

"This beaste is called a Musion, for that he is enimie to Myse and Rattes. He is slye and wittie, and seeth so sharpely that he overcommeth darknes of the nighte by the shyninge lyghte of his eyne. In shape of body he is like unto a Leopard, and hath a great mouth. He dothe delight that he enioyeth his libertye; and in his youthe he is swifte, plyante, and merye. He maketh a ruffull noyse and a gastefull when he profereth to fighte with an other. He is a cruell beaste when he is wilde, and falleth on his owne feete from most high places; and vneth is hurt therewith."

"When he hath a fayre skinne, he is, as it were, prowde thereof, and then be goeth faste aboute to be seene. . ."

Those who have seen the wild cat of Britain, especially in confinement, will doubtless be ready to endorse this description as being "true to the life," even to the "ruffull noyse," or his industry in the way of fighting. Yet even this old chronicler mentions the fact of his being "wilde," clearly indicating a similar animal in a state of domestication. Later on we find Maister Salmon giving an account of the cat in his strangely-curious book, "Salmon's Compleat English Physician; or, the Druggist's Shop Opened," A.D. 1693, in which he relates that marvellous properties exist in the brain, bones, etc., of the cat, giving recipes mostly cruel and incredible. He describes "Catus the Cat" in such terms as these :

"*The Cat of Mountain*, all which are of one nature, and agree much in one shape, save as to their magnitude, the *wild Cat* being larger, than the *Tame* and the *Cat of Mountain* much larger than the *wild Cat*. It has a broad Face, almost like a Lyon, short Ear, large Whiskers, shining Eyes, short, smooth Hair, long Tail, rough Tongue, and armed on its Feet, with Claws, being a crafty, subtle, watchful Creature, very loving and familiar with Man-kind, the mortal enemy to the Rat, Mouse, and all sorts of Birds, which it seizes on as its prey. As to its Eyes, Authors say that they shine in the Night, and see better at the full, and more dimly at the change of the moon; as also that the Cat doth vary his Eyes with the Sun, the Apple of its Eye being long at Sun rise, round towards Noon, and not to be seen at all at night, but the whole Eye shining in the night. These appearances of the Cats' Eyes I am sure are true, but whether they answer to the times of the day, I never observed." "Its flesh. is not usually eaten, yet in some countries it is accounted an excellent dish."

Mr. Blaine, in his excellent and useful work, the "Encyclopaedia of Rural Sports"-a book no sportsman should be without-thus discusses, the origin of the domestic cat compared with the British wild cat:

"We have yet, however, to satisfy ourselves with regard to the origin of the true wild cat (*Felis catus*, Linn.), which, following the analogies of the *Felinae* generally, are almost exclusively native to countries warmer than our own. It is true that occasionally varieties of the *Felinae* do breed in our caravans and menageries, where artificial warmth is kept up to represent something like a tropical temperature ; but the circumstance is too rare to ground any opinion on of their ever having been indigenous here-at least, since our part of the globe has cooled down to its present temperature. It is, therefore, more than probable that both the wild and the tame cat have been derived from some other extra-European source or sources. We say source or sources, for such admission begets another difficulty not easily got over, which is this, that if both of these grimalkins own one common root, in which variety was it that the very marked differences between them have taken place? Most sportsmen, we believe, suspect that they own one common origin and some naturalists also do the same, contending that the differences observable between them are attributable solely to the long-continued action of external agencies, which had modified the various organs to meet the varied necessities of the animals. The wild cat, according to this theory, having to contend with powerfull enemies, expanded in general dimensions; its limbs, particularly, became massive; and its long and strong claws, with the powerful muscular mechanism which operated on them, fitted it for a life of predacity. Thus its increased size enabled it to stand some time before any other dogs than high-bred foxhounds, and even before them- also, I any place but the direct open ground, There exist, however, in direct contradiction to this opinion, certain specialities proper to the wild, and certain other to the domestic cat, besides the simple expansion of bulk, which sufficiently disprove their identity. It will be seen that a remarkable difference exists between the tails of

the two animals; that of the domestic being, as is well known, long, and tapering elegantly to a point, whereas that of the wild cat is seen to be broad, and to terminate abruptly in a blunt or rounded extremity. Linnaeus and Buffon having both of them confounded these two species into one, have contributed much to propagate this error, which affords us another opportunity of adding to the many we have taken of remarking on the vast importance of comparative anatomy, which enables us to draw just distinctions between animals that might otherwise erroneously be adjudged to be dependent on external agencies, etc. Nor need we rest here, for what doubt can be entertained on the subject when we point at the remarkable difference between the intestines of the two ? *Those of the domestic are nine times the length of its body, whereas, in the wild cat, they are little more than three times as long as the body.*"

The food of the wild cat is said to consist of animals, and in the opinion of some, fish should be added. Why not also birds' eggs? Cats are particularly fond of the latter. In the event of their finding and destroying a nest, they invariably eat the eggs, and generally the shells.

Much has been written as to the aptitude of the domestic cat at catching fish. If this be so, are fish necessarily a part of the food of the native wild cat? Numerous instances are adduced of our "household cat" plunging into water in pursuit of and capture of fish. Although I have spent

much time in watching cats that were roaming beside streams and about ponds, there has never been even an attempt at "fishing." Frogs they will take and kill, often greedily devouring the small ones. Yet doubtless they will hunt, catch, and eat fish, for the fact has become proverbial.



WILD CAT, BRITISH MUSEUM.

A writer in "Menageries" states: "There is no doubt, that wild cats will seize on fish, and the passionate longing of the domestic cat after this food is an evidence of the natural desire. We have seen a cat overcome her natural reluctance to wet her feet, and take an eel out of a pail of water." Dr. Darwin alludes to this propensity: "Mr. Leonard, a very intelligent friend of mine, saw a cat catch a trout by darting on it in deep, clear water, at the Mill, Wexford, near Lichfield. The cat belonged to Mr. Stanley, who had often seen it catch fish."

Cases have also been known of cats catching fish in shallow water, springing on them from the banks of streams and ponds; but I take this as not *the habit* of the domestic cat, though it is not unusual.

Gray, in a poem, tells of a cat's death through drowning, while attempting to take gold-fish from a vase filled with water.

Of Dr. Samuel Johnson it is related, that his cat having fallen sick and refused all food, he became aware that cats are fond of fish. With this knowledge before him he went to the

fishmonger's and bought an oyster for the sick creature, wrapped it in paper and brought the appetising morsel home. The cat relished the dainty food, and the Doctor was seen going on the same kindly errand every day until his suffering feline fiend was restored to health.

Still this is no proof that the *wild* cat, in a pure state of nature, feeds on fish. Again, it is nothing unusual for domestic cats to catch and eat cockroaches, crickets, cockchafers, also large and small moths, but not so all. In domesticity some are almost omnivorous. But is the wild cat? Taking its anatomical structure into consideration, there is doubtless a wide distinction, both as regards food and habit.

In Daniel's "Rural Sports," A.D. 1813, the wild cat is stated to be "now scarce in England, inhabiting the mountainous and woody parts. Mr. Pennant describes it as *four* times the size of the house cat, but the head larger, that it multiplies as fast, and may be called the British *tiger*, being the fiercest and most destructive beast we have. When only wounded with shot they will attack the person who injured them, and often have strength enough to be no despicable enemy."

Through the kind courtesy of that painstaking, excellent, observant, and eminent naturalist, Mr. J. E. Harting, I am enabled to reprint a portion of his lecture on the origin of the domestic cat, and which afterwards appeared in *The Field*. Although many of the statements are known to naturalist, still I prefer giving them in the order in which they are so skilfully arranged, presenting, as they do, a very garland of facts connected with the British wild cat (*Felis catus*) up to the present, and which I deem valuable from many points of view, but the more particularly as a record of an animal once abundant in England, where it has now apparently almost, if not quite, ceased to exist.

"In England in former days, the wild cat was included amongst the beasts of chase, and is often mentioned in royal grants giving liberty to inclose forest land and licence to hunt there (extracts from several such grants will be found in the *Zoologist* for 1878, p. 251, and 1880, p. 251). Nor was it for diversion alone that the wild cat was hunted. Its fur was much used as trimming for dresses, and in this way worn even by nuns at one time. Thus, in Archbishop Corboyle's 'Canons,' anno 1127, it is ordained 'that no abbess or nun use more costly apparel than such as is made of lambs' or cats' skins,' and as no other part of the animal but the skin was of any use here, it grew into a proverb that 'You can have nothing of a cat but her skin.'

"The wild cat is believed to be now extinct, not only in England and Wales, but in a great part of the south of Scotland. About five years ago a Scottish naturalist resident in Stirlingshire (Mr. J. A. Harvie Brown) took a great deal of trouble, by means of printed circulars addressed to the principal landowners throughout Scotland and the Isles, to ascertain the existing haunts of the wild cat in that part of the United Kingdom. The result of his inquiries, embodying some very interesting information, was published in the *Zoologist* for January, 1881. The replies which he received indicated pretty clearly, although perhaps unexpectedly, that there are now no wild cats in Scotland south of a line drawn from Oban on the west coast up the Brander Pass to Dalmally, and thence following the borders of Perthshire to the junction of the three counties of Perth, Forfar and Aberdeen, northward to Tomintoul, and so to the city of Inverness. We are assured that it is only to the northward and westward of this line that the animal still keeps a footing in suitable localities, finding its principal shelter in the great deer forests. Thus we see that the wild cat is being gradually driven northward before advancing civilisation and the increased supervision of moors and forests. Just as the reindeer in the twelfth century was driven northward from England and found its last home in Caithness, and as the wolf followed

it a few centuries later, so we may expect one day that the wild cat will come to be numbered amongst the 'extinct British animals.'

"A recent writer in the new edition of the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' (art. *Cat*) expresses the opinion that the wild cat still exists in Wales and in the north of England, but gives no proof of its recent occurrence there. From time to time we see reports in the newspapers to the effect that a wild cat has been shot or trapped in some out-of-the-way part of the country; but it usually turns out to be a large example of the domestic cat, coloured like the wild form. It is remarkable that when cats in England are allowed to return to a feral state, their offspring, in the course of generations, show a tendency to revert to the wild type of the country; partly, no doubt, in consequence of former interbreeding with the wild species when the latter was common throughout all the wooded portions of the country, and partly because the light-coloured varieties of escaped cats, being more readily seen and destroyed, are gradually eliminated, while the darker wild type is perpetuated. The great increase in size observable in the offspring of escaped domestic cats is no doubt due to continuous living on freshly-killed, warm-blooded animals, and to the greater use of the muscles which their new mode of life requires. In this way I think we may account for the size and appearance of the so-called 'wild cats' which are from time to time reported south of the Tweed.

" Perhaps the last genuine wild cat seen in England was the one shot by Lord Ravensworth at Eslington, Northumberland, in 1853; ("Trans. Tyneside Nat. Field Club," 1864, vol. vi. p. 123) although so recently as March, 1883, a cat was shot in Bullington Wood, Lincolnshire, which in point of size, colour, and markings was said to be quite indistinguishable from the wild *Felis catus*. Bullington Wood is one of an almost continuous chain of great woodlands, extending from Mid-Lincolnshire to near Peterborough. Much of the district has never been preserved for game, and keepers are few and far between; hence the wild animals have enjoyed an almost complete immunity from persecution. Cats are known to have bred in these woods in a wild state for generations, and there is no improbability that the cat in question may have descended directly from the old British wild cat. Under all the circumstances, however, it seems more likely to be a case of reversion under favourable conditions from the domestic to the wild type.

"In Ireland, strange to say, notwithstanding reports to the contrary, all endeavours to find a genuine wild cat have failed, the so-called 'wild cat' of the natives proving to be the 'marten cat,' a very different animal.

"We thus come back to the question, with which we started, namely, the question of origin of the domestic cat; and the conclusion, I think, at which we must arrive is, that although *Felis catus* has contributed to the formation of the existing race of domestic cats, it is not the sole ancestor. Several wild species of Egyptian and Indian origin having been ages ago reclaimed, the interbreeding of their offspring and crossing with other wild species in the countries to which they have been at various times exported, has resulted in the gradual production of the many varieties, so different in shape and colour, with which we are now familiar."

Before quitting the subject, I would point to the fact that when the domestic cat takes to the woods and becomes wild, it becomes much larger, stronger, and changes in colour; and there can be little doubt that during the centuries of the existence of the cat in England there must have been numberless crosses and intercrosses, both with regard to the *males* of the domestic cat as with wild *females*, and *vice versa*; yet the curious fact remains that the *wild* cat still retains its peculiar colouring and form, as is shown by the skins preserved in the British Museum and elsewhere.

Mr. Darwin, in his "Voyage of the Beagle," 1845 (P. 120), in his notes of the first colonists of La Plata, A.D. 1535, says, among other animals that he saw was "the common cat altered into a large and fierce, animal, inhabiting the rocky hills," etc.

Another point on which I wish to give my impressions is the act of the cat in what is termed "sharpening its claws." Mr. Darwin notes certain trees, where the jaguars "*Sharpen. their claws,*" and mentions the scars were of different ages; he also thought they did this; "*to tear off the horny points.*" This, I believe, is the received opinion among naturalists; but I differ entirely from this view of the practice. It is a fact, however, and worthy of notice, that all cats do so, even the domestic cat. I had *one* of the legs of a kitchen table entirely torn to pieces by my cats; and after much observation. I came to the conclusion that it has nothing whatever to do with *sharpening* the claws, but is done to stretch the muscles and tendons of the feet so that they work readily and strongly, as the retraction of the claws for lengthened periods must tend to contract the tendons used for the purpose of extending or retracting; therefore the cats fix the points of their claws in something soft, and bear downwards with the whole weight of the body, simply to stretch and, by use, to strengthen the ligatures that pull the claws, forward. It is also to be noted that even the domestic cat goes to one particular place or tree to insert the claws and drag forward the muscles--perhaps even in the leather of an arm-chair, a costly practice. Why one object is always selected is that they may not betray their presence by numerous marks in the neighbourhood, if wild, to other animals or their enemies. I have mentioned this to my brother, John Jenner Weir, F.L.S., and he concurs with me throughout.

I find in Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes" that of the names applied to companies of animals in the Middle Ages, several are still in use, though many have become obsolete; and also a few of the beasts have ceased to exist in a wild state. Some were very curious, such as a *skulk* of foxes, a *cete*, of badgers, a *huske* or *down*. of hares, a *nest* of rabbits, and a *clowder* of cats, and a *kindle* of young cats. Now, cats are said to *kitten*, and rabbits *kindle*.

The following shows the value of the cat nearly a thousand years ago; it is to be found in Bewick's "Quadrupeds": "In time of Hoel the Good, King of Wales, who died in the year 948, laws were made as well to preserve as to fix the different prices of animals; among which the cat is included, as being at that period of great importance, on account of its scarcity and utility.

"The price of a kitten, before it could see, was fixed at one penny, till proof could be given of its having caught a mouse, twopence; after which it was rated at fourpence, which was a great sum in those days, when the value of specie was extremely high. It was likewise required that it should be perfect in its sense of hearing and seeing, should be a good mouser, have its claws whole, and, if a female, be a careful nurse. If it failed in any of these good qualities, the seller was to forfeit to the buyer a third part of its value. If any one should steal or kill a cat that guarded the Prince's granary, he was either to forfeit a milch ewe, her fleece and lamb, or as much wheat as when poured on .the cat suspended by its feet (its head touching the floor), would form a heap high enough to cover the tip of the former." Bewick remarks: "Hence we may conclude that cats were not originally natives of these islands, and from the great care taken to improve the breed of this prolific creature, we may suppose were but little known at that period."

I scarcely think this the right conclusion, the English wild cat being anatomically different. In Hone's popular works it is stated that "Cats are supposed to have been brought into England from the island of Cyprus by some foreign merchants who came hither for tin," Mr. Hone further says: "Wild cats were kept by our ancient kings for hunting. The officers who had

charge of these cats seem to have had appointments of equal consequence with the masters of the king's hounds; they were called *Catatores*."

Beaumont and Fletcher in *The Scornful Lady* allude to the hunting of cats in the line,  
Bring out the *cat-hounds*, I'll make you take a tree.

But although large and ferocious, the wild cat was not considered a match for some of the lesser animals, for in Salmon's "English Physician," 1693, we read that "The weasel is an enemy to ravens, crows, and *cats*, and although cats may sometimes set upon them, yet they can scarcely overcome them."

Nevertheless, we find in Daniel's "Rural Sports," 1813, that "*Wild cats* formerly were an object of *sport* to huntsmen. Thus, Gerard Camvile, 6 John, had special licence to hunt the hare, fox, and wild cat, throughout all the King's *forests*; and 23 Henry III., Earl Warren, by giving Simon de Pierpont a *goshawk*, obtained leave to hunt the buck, doe, hart, hind, hare, fox, goat, *cat*, or any other wild beast, in certain lands of Simon's. But it was not for diversion alone that this animal was pursued; for the *skin* was much used by the nuns in their habits, as a *fur*."

Still it appears from Mr. Charles Darwin's "Voyage of the Beagle," that tastes vary. "Doctor Shaw was laughed at for stating the flesh of the lion is in great esteem, having no small affinity with veal, both in the colour, taste, and flavour. Such certainly is the case with the puma. The Guachos differ in their opinion whether the jaguar is good eating; but were unanimous in saying the *cat* is *excellent*."

It is also stated that the Chinese fatten and eat cats with considerable relish; but of this I can obtain no reliable information, some of my friends from China not having heard of the custom, if such it is.

Again referring to the skin of the cat, *vide* Strutt; "In the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Edward III., it was decreed, after enumerating the various kinds of cloth that were to be worn by the nobles, knights, dames, and others, that (Article 2) tradesmen, artificers, and men in office, called yeomen their wives and children, shall wear no kind of furs excepting those of lambs, of rabbits, of *cats*, and of foxes." Further: "No man, unless he be possessed of the yearly value of forty shillings, shall wear any furs but black and white lambs' skins." Lambs' and cats' skins were equivalent in value and order.

In the twenty-second year of this monarch's reign, all the former statutes "against excess in apparel" were repealed.

My old friend Fairholt, in his useful work on costume, says of the Middle Ages: "The peasants wore cat skins, badger skins, etc."

One of the reasons why the skin of cats was used on cloaks and other garments for trimming, being that, it showed humility in dress, and not by way of affectation or vanity, but for warmth and comfort, it being of the lowest value of any, with the exception of lambs' skin and badgers'; and adopted by some priests as well as nuns, when wishing to impress others with their deep sense of humility in all things, even to their wearing-apparel. The proof of which Strutt's "Habits of the Anglo-Normans," *circa* twelfth century, fully illustrates:

"William of Malmesbury, speaking of Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, assures us that he avoided all appearance of pride and ostentation in his dress, and though he was very wealthy, he never used any furs finer than lambs' skin for the lining of his garments. Being blamed for such needless humility by Geoffrey, Bishop of Constans, who told him that 'He not only could afford, but even ought to wear those of sables, of beavers, or of foxes,' he replied: 'It may indeed be proper for you politicians, skilful in the affairs of the world, to adorn yourselves, in



the skins of such cunning animals; but for me, who am a plain man, and not subject to change my opinion, the skins of lambs are quite sufficient.' 'If,' returned his opponent, 'the finer furs are unpleasant, you might at least make use of those of the cat.' 'Believe me,' answered the facetious prelate, 'the lamb of God is much oftener sung in the Church than the cat of God.' This witty retort put Geoffrey to the blush, and threw the whole company into a violent fit of laughter."

Of a very different character was the usage of the cat at clerical festivals. In Mill's "History of the Crusades," one reads with some degree of horror that "In the Middle Ages the cat was a very important personage in religious festivals. At Aix, in Provence, on the festival of the Corpus Christi, the finest he-cat of the country, wrapped like a child in swaddling clothes, was exhibited in a magnificent shrine to public admiration. Every knee was bent, every hand strewed flowers or poured incense; and pussy was treated in all respects as the god of the day. On the festival, however, of St. John (June 24), the poor cat's fate was reversed. A number of cats were put in a wicker basket, and thrown alive into the midst of a large fire, kindled in the public square by the bishop and his clergy. Hymns and anthems were sung, and processions were made by the priests and people in honour of the sacrifice."

While the foregoing was about being printed, Mr. Edward Hamilton, M.D., writing to *The Field*, May 11th, 1889, gives information of a wild cat being shot in Inverness-shire. I therefore insert the paragraph, as every record of so scarce an animal is of importance and value, especially when it is descriptive. He states: "A fine specimen of the wild cat (*Felis sylvestris*) was sent to me on May 3rd, trapped in Inverness-shire on the Ben Nevis, range. It was too much decomposed to exhibit. Its dimensions were: from nose to base of tail, 1 foot 11 inches; length of tail, 1 foot; height at shoulder, 1 foot 2 inches; the length of small intestine, 1 foot 8 1/2 inches; and the large intestine, 1 foot 1 inch." It will be seen by these measurements that the animal was not so large as some that have been taken, though excelling in size many of the domestic varieties.