

Cats

By Elliott O'Donnell

In opening this volume on Animals and their associations with the unknown, I will commence with a case of hauntings in the Old Manor House, at Oxenby.

My informant was a Mrs. Hartnoll, whom I can see in my mind's eye, as distinctly as if I were looking at her now. Hers was a personality that no lapse of time, nothing could efface; a personality that made itself felt on boys of all temperaments, most of all, of course, on those who—like myself—were highly strung and sensitive.

She was classical mistress at L.'s, the then well—known dame school in Clifton, where for three years—prior to migrating to a Public School— I was well grounded in all the mysticisms of Kennedy's Latin Primer and Smith's First Greek Principia.

I doubt if she got anything more than a very small salary—governesses in those days were shockingly remunerated—and I know,—poor soul, she had to work monstrously hard. Drumming Latin and Greek into heads as thick as ours was no easy task.

But there were times, when the excessive tension on the nerves proving too much, Mrs. Hartnoll stole a little relaxation; when she allowed herself to chat with us, and even to smile—Heavens those smiles And when—I can feel the tingling of my pulses at the bare mention of it—she spoke about herself, stated she had once been young—a declaration so astounding, so utterly beyond our comprehension, that we were rendered quite speechless—and told us anecdotes.

Of many of her narratives I have no recollection, but one or two, which interested me more than the rest, are almost as fresh in my mind as when recounted. The one that appealed to me most, and which I have every reason to believe is absolutely true,¹ is as follows:—I give it as nearly as I can in her own somewhat stilted style:—

“Up to the age of nineteen, I resided with my parents in the Manor House, Oxenby. It was an old building, dating back, I believe, to reign of Edward VI, and had originally served as the residence of noble families. Built, or, rather, faced with split flints, and edged and buttressed with cut grey stone, it had a majestic though very gloomy appearance, and seen from afar resembled nothing so much as a huge and grotesquely decorated sarcophagus. In the centre of its frowning and menacing front was the device of a cat, constructed out of black shingles, and having white shingles for the eyes; the effect being curiously realistic, especially on moonlight nights, when anything more lifelike and sinister could scarcely have been conceived. The artist, whoever he was, had a more than human knowledge of cats—he portrayed not merely their bodies but their souls.

“In style the front of the house was somewhat castellated. Two semicircular bows, or half towers, placed at a suitable distance from each other, rose from the base to the summit of the edifice, to the height of four or five stairs; and were pierced, at every floor, with rows of stone-mullioned windows. The flat wall between had larger windows, lighting the great hall, gallery, and upper apartments. These windows were wholly composed of stained glass, engraved with every imaginable fantastic design—imps, satyrs, dragons, witches, queer-shaped trees, hands, eyes, Circles, triangles and cats.

¹ I have subsequently met several people who experienced the same phenomena in the house, which was standing a short time ago.

“The towers, half included in the building, were completely circular within, and contained the winding stairs of the mansion; and whoever ascended them when a storm was raging seemed rising by a whirlwind to the clouds.

“In the upper rooms even the wildest screams of the hurricane were drowned in the rattling clamour of the assaulted casements. When a gale of wind took the building in front, it rocked it to the foundations, and, at such times, threatened its instant demolition.

“Midway between the towers there stood forth a heavy stone porch with a Gothic gateway, surmounted by a battlemented parapet, made gable fashion, the apex of which was garnished by a pair of dolphins, rampant and antagonistic, whose corkscrew tails seemed contorted—especially at night—by the last agonies of rage convulsed. The porch doors stood open, except in tremendous weather the inner ones were regularly shut and barred after all who entered. They led into a wide vaulted and lofty hall, the walls of which were decorated with faded tapestry, that rose, and fell, and rustled in the most mysterious fashion every time there was the suspicion—and often barely the suspicion—of a breeze.

Interspersed with the tapestry—and in great contrast to its antiquity—were quite and very ordinary portraits of my family. The general fittings and furniture, both of the hall and house, were sombre and handsome—truss-beams, corbels, girders and panels were of the blackest oak; and the general effect of all this, augmented, if anything, by the windows, which were too high and narrow to admit of much light, was much the same as that produced by the interior of a subterranean chapel or charnel house.

“From the hall proceeded doorways and passages, more than my memory can now particularize. Of these portals, one at each end conducted to the tower stairs, others to reception rooms and domestic offices.

“The whole of the house being too large for us, only one wing—the right and newer of the two—was occupied, the other was unfurnished, and generally shut up. I say generally because there were times when either my mother or father—the servants never ventured there—forgot to lock the doors, and the handles yielding to my daring fingers, I surreptitiously crept in.

“Everywhere—even in daylight, even on the sunniest of mornings—were dark shadows that hung around the ingles and recesses of the rooms, the deep cupboards, the passages, and silent, winding staircases.

“There was one corridor—long, low, vaulted—where these shadows assembled in particular. I can see them now, as I saw them then, as they have come to me many times in my dreams, grouped about the doorways, flitting to and fro on the bare, dismal boards, and congregated in menacing clusters at the head of the sepulchral staircase leading to the cellars. Generally, and excepting at times when the weather was particularly violent, the silence here was so emphatic that I could never feel it was altogether natural, but rather that it was assumed especially for my benefit—to intimidate me. If I moved, if I coughed, almost if I breathed, the whole passage was filled with hoarse reverberating echoes, that, in my affrighted ears, appeared to terminate in a series of mirthless, malevolent chuckles. Once, when fascinated beyond control, I stole on tiptoe along the passage, momentarily expecting a door to fly open and something grim and horrible to pounce out on me, I was brought to a standstill by a loud, clanging noise, as if a pail or some such utensil were set down very roughly on a stone floor. Then there was the sound of rushing footsteps and of someone hastily ascending the cellar staircase. In fearful anticipation as to what I should see—for there was something in the sounds that told me they were not made by anything human—I stood in the middle of the passage and stared. Up, up, up they came, until I saw the dark, indefinite shape of something very horrid, but which I could not—I dare not—

define. It was accompanied by the clanging of a pail. I tried to scream, but my tongue cleaving to the roof of my mouth prevented my uttering a syllable, and when I essayed to move, I found I was temporarily paralysed. The thing came rushing down on me. I grew icy cold all over, and when it was within a few feet of me, my horror was so great, I fainted.

“On recovering consciousness, it was some minutes before I summoned up courage to open my eyes, but when I did so, they alighted on nothing but the empty passage—the thing had disappeared.

“On another occasion, when I was clandestinely paying a visit to the unused wing, and was in the act of mounting one of the staircases leading from the corridor, I have just described, to the first floor, there was the sound of a furious scuffle overhead, and something dashed down the stairs past me. I instinctively looked up, and there, glaring down at me from over the balustrade, was a very white face. It was that of a man, but very badly proportioned—the forehead being low and receding, and the rest of the face too long and narrow. The crown rose to a kind of peak, the ears were pointed and set very low down and far back. The mouth was very cruel and thin-lipped; the teeth were yellow and uneven. There was no hair on the face, but that on the head was red and matted. The eyes were obliquely set, pale blue, and full of an expression so absolutely malignant that every atom of blood in my veins seemed to congeal as I met their gaze. I could not clearly see the body of the thing, as it was hazy and indistinct, but the impression I got of it was that it was clad in some sort of tight-fitting, fantastic garment. As the landing was in semi-darkness, and the face at all events was most startlingly visible, I concluded it brought with it a light of its own, though there was none of that lurid glow attached to it, which I subsequently learned is almost inseparable from spirit phenomena seen under similar conditions.

“For some seconds, I was too overcome with terror to move, but my faculties at length reasserting themselves, I turned round and flew to the other wing of the house with the utmost precipitation.

“One would have thought that after these experiences nothing would have induced me to have run the risk of another such encounter, yet only a few days after the incident of the head, I was again impelled by a fascination I could not withstand to visit the same quarters. In sickly anticipation of what my eyes would alight on, I stole to the foot of the staircase and peeped cautiously up. To my infinite joy there was nothing there but a bright patch of sunshine, that, in the most unusual fashion, had forced its way through from one of the slits of windows near at hand.

“After gazing at it long enough to assure myself it was only sunshine, I quitted the spot, and proceeded on my way down the vaulted corridor. Just as I was passing one of the doors, it opened. I stopped—terrified. What could it be? Bit by bit, inch by inch, I watched the gap slowly widen. At last, just as I felt I must either go mad or die, something appeared—and, to my utter astonishment, it was a big, black cat limping painfully, it came towards me with a curious, gliding motion, and I perceived with a thrill of horror that it had been very cruelly maltreated. One of its eyes looked as if it had been gouged out—its ears were lacerated, whilst the paw of one of its hindlegs had either been torn or hacked off. As I drew back from it, it made a feeble and pathetic effort to reach me and rub itself against my legs, as is the way with cats, but in so doing it fell down, and uttering a half purr, half gurgle, vanished—seeming to sink through the hard oak boards.

“That evening my youngest brother met with an accident in the barn at the back of the house, and died. Though I did not then associate his death with the apparition of the cat, the latter

shocked me much, for I was extremely fond of animals. I did not dare venture in the wing again for nearly two years.

“When next I did so, it was early one June morning—between five and six, and none of the family, saving my father, who was out in the fields looking after his men, were as yet up. I explored the dreaded corridor and staircase, and was crossing the floor of one of the rooms I had hitherto regarded as immune from ghostly influences, when there was an icy rush of wind, the door behind me slammed to violently, and a heavy object struck me with great force in the hollow of my back. With a cry of surprise and agony I turned sharply round, and there, lying on the floor, stretched out in the last convulsions of death, was the big black cat, maimed and bleeding as it had been on the previous occasion. How I got out of the room I don’t recollect. I was too horror-stricken to know exactly what I was doing, but I distinctly remember that, as I tugged the door open, there was a low, gleeful chuckle, and something slipped by me and disappeared in the direction of the corridor. At noon that day my mother had a seizure of apoplexy, and died at midnight.

“Again there was a lapse of years—this time nearly four—when, sent on an errand for my father, I turned the key of one of the doors leading into the empty wing, and once again found myself within the haunted precincts. All was just as it had been on the occasion of my last visit—gloom, stillness and cobwebs reigned everywhere, whilst permeating the atmosphere was a feeling of intense sadness and depression.

“I did what was required of me as quickly as possible, and was crossing one of the rooms to make my exit, when a dark shadow fell athwart the threshold of the door, and I saw the cat.

* * *

“That evening my father dropped dead as he was hastening home through the fields. He had long suffered from heart disease.

“After his death we—that is to say, my brother, sisters and self—were obliged to leave the house and go out into the world to earn our living. We never went there again, and never heard if any of the subsequent tenants experienced similar manifestations.”

This is as nearly as I can recollect Mrs. Hartnoll’s story. But as it is a good many years since I heard it, there is just a possibility of some of the details—the smaller ones at all events—having escaped my memory.

When I was grown up, I stayed for a few weeks near Oxenby, and met, at a garden party, a Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, the then occupants of the Manor House.

I asked if they believed in ghosts, and told them I had always heard their house was haunted.

“Well,” they said, “we never believed in ghosts till we came to Oxenby, but we have seen and heard such strange things since we have been in the Manor House that we are now prepared to believe anything.”

They then went on to tell me that they—and many of their visitors and servants—had seen the phantasms of a very hideous and malignant old man, clad in tight-fitting hosiery of mediæval days, and a maimed and bleeding big, black cat, that seemed sometimes to drop from the ceiling, and sometimes to be thrown at them. In one of the passages all sorts of queer sounds, such as whinings, moanings, screeches, clangings of pails and rattlings of chains, were heard, whilst something, no one could ever see distinctly, but which they all felt to be indescribably nasty, rushed up the cellar steps and flew past, as if engaged in a desperate chase. Indeed, the

disturbances were of so constant and harrowing nature, that the wing had to be vacated and was eventually locked up.

The Wheelers excavated in different parts of the haunted wing and found, in the cellar, at a depth of some eight or nine feet, the skeletons of three men and two women; whilst in the wainscoting of the passage they discovered the bones of a boy, all of which remains they had properly interred in the churchyard. According to local tradition, handed down through many centuries by word of mouth, the house originally belonged to a knight, who, with his wife, was killed out hunting. He had only one child, a boy of about ten, who became a ward in chancery. The man appointed by the Crown as guardian to this child proved an inhuman monster, and after ill-treating the lad in every conceivable manner, eventually murdered him and tried to substitute a bastard boy of his own in his place. For a time the fraud succeeded, but on its being eventually found out, the murderer and his offspring were both brought to trial and hanged.

During his occupation of the house, many people were seen to enter the premises, but never leave them, and the place got the most sinister reputation. Among other deeds credited to the murderer and his offspring was the mutilation and boiling of a cat—the particular pet of the young heir, who was compelled to witness the whole revolting process. Years later, a subsequent owner of the property had a monument erected in the churchyard to the memory of this poor, abused child, and on the front of the house constructed the device of the cat.

Though it is impossible to determine what amount of truth there may be in this tradition, it certainly seems to accord with the hauntings, and to supply some sort of explanation to them. The ghostly head on the banisters might well be that of the low and brutal guardian, whose spirit would be the exact counterpart of his mind. The figure seen, and noises heard in the passage, point to the re-enactment of some tragedy, possibly the murder of the heir, or the slaughter of his cat, in either of which a bucket might easily have played a grimly significant part. And if human murderers and their victims have phantasms, why should not animals have phantasms too

Why should not the phenomenon of the cat seen by Mrs. Hartnoll and the Wheelers have been the actual phantasm of an earthbound cat?

No amount of reasoning—religious or otherwise—has as yet annihilated the possibility of all forms of earthly life possessing spirits.

LETTER FROM MY WIFE

I heard the foregoing account from my husband when first I met him years ago, and I know it to be true. I have seen the rooms, etc. in the Old Manor House, Oxenby, where the incidents Mrs. Hartnoll mentions took place.

ADA B. O'DONNELL.

July 2, 1913.

To further substantiate my views with regard to a future existence for animals, I reproduce (by permission of the Editor) the following letters and articles that have appeared from time to time in the *Occult Review*: —

LETTER I

That other Cat

One evening about four years ago I was in my drawing-room with two friends; we were all standing up on the point of going to bed, and only waiting till the old cook had succeeded in inducing the grey Persian cat to come in for the night. This was sometimes difficult, and then cook came up as on this occasion and called him from the balcony, and the French window was wide open, when a cat rushed in at the window and through the door.

“What was that?” we said, looking at one another. It was not Kitty, the grey Persian, but darker, and was it really a cat, or what? My friend “Rügen” has written the account of what she saw before seeing what I have said. “Iona” confirms our description. What I saw seemed dark and shadowy and yet unmistakably a cat. It seemed to me like the predecessor of Kitty, which was a black Persian he had the same habit of coming in at night by this window, and he constantly rushed through the room, and downstairs, being in a hurry for his supper. A moment or two afterwards the grey cat walked slowly in, and though we searched the house, we could find no other.

“THANET.”

LETTER 2

Fräulein Muller’s Story

Three or four years ago, Iona and I were sitting in the drawing-room on a Sunday evening, when cook came in to ask for Kitty (a silver-grey Persian cat) to settle him in the kitchen for the night. Kitty was still in the garden, and cook went to the balcony calling him.

Suddenly I saw a black cat flying in and disappearing behind or under a seat. First, I did not take much notice of this. But when a minute after Kitty slowly and solemnly stepped followed by cook, it struck me that the dark something could not have been Kitty, and Thanet and Iona made the remark simultaneously. Now we began to look for the dark one all over the place without any result. Cook had not seen any cat passing her on the balcony, but Kitty the grey one. Thanet had had a black Persian cat, which died before Kitty came.

“RÜGEN.”

LETTER 3

I can entirely corroborate the accounts written by “Thanet” and “Rügen.”

I remember that I saw something like a dark shadow move very quickly and disappear in front of a cottage piano. I exclaimed simultaneously with my friends “What was that and shared their surprise when no black cat was found, and the grey Persian walked in unconcernedly through the open window.

“IONA.”

LETTER 4

What Kitty saw

Cook said, “I wish you would come downstairs and see how strangely Kitty behaves as soon as I open the cupboard. There is nothing in it but the wood; I turned it all out to see what might be the reason—not even a mousehole can I find.” Some days previously cook had told me that

nothing could induce Kitty to sleep in his basket, and one day he would not eat any food in the kitchen, and his meals had to be given him outside. So I went down to please cook. Kitty was picked up, and while cook petted and stroked him, she knelt down and opened the cupboard. Kitty, stretching his neck and looking with big, frightened eyes into the cupboard's corner, suddenly turned round; struggling out of cook's hold and rushing over her shoulder, he flew out of the kitchen. Getting up, Cook said: "That's always what he does, just as if he was seeing something horrible!"

Next day I encouraged cook to talk of Ruff, the former black cat, which had been a great favourite of hers, and which she had been nursing when he was dying. "Oh, poor thing, when he was ill, he would creep into dark corners, so I put him in his basket into the cupboard, making it very comfortable for him, and there he died"—pointing to the very corner which caused such horror to Kitty.

"RÜGEN."

LETTER 5

Captain Humphries's Story—A Materialized Cat

My son had the following experience at the age of four years in our Worcestershire home.

He was an only child and spent much of his time in the company of a cat who shared his tastes and pursuits even to the extent of fishing in the River Weir with him, the cat being far more proficient at the sport than the boy. When the cat died we none of us dared to break the news to the child, and were much surprised when he asked us to say why his cat only came to play with him at nights nowadays. When we questioned him about it, he stoutly maintained that his cat was there in bodily form every night after he went to bed, looking much the same but a little thinner.

At about the same age, one evening after being in bed one hour, I heard him cry out, and going upstairs (his maid also heard and ran up) and asking him what was the matter, he said that an old gentleman with a long grey beard like his grandfather came into his room, and stood at the front of his bed. At the very moment, the former had a seizure in his carriage while driving through the streets of Birmingham, from which he died without regaining consciousness; later on he recognized a photograph of his grandfather as being the person he saw at the foot of his bed. My wife, the maid, and myself can vouch for the accuracy of these statements, also friends to whom we have related these facts.

"MUNSTER."

LETTER 6

Mrs. E. J. Ellis's Story—"The Old Woman's Cat"

My wife, writes Mr. Ellis, who was brought up in Germany, and who is not sufficiently confident about her English to attempt to put down anything for publication in that language, tells me the following story for the *Occult Review*:

"When I was a little girl living with my family near Michelstadt in the Odenwald, I remember an old woman like an old witch, whose name was Louise, and who was called 'Pfeiffe Louise,' because she exhibited pipes for sale in her cottage window, along with the cheap dress-stuffs,

needles and threads, and simple toys for children which were her stock-in-trade. She had a favourite cat which was devoted to her, but its attachment doesn't seem to have been enough to make her happy, for she married a young sergeant named Lautenschlager, who might have been her son—or indeed her grandson—and who, as everyone said, courted her for her money. She died as long ago as 1869 and during her last illness the devoted cat was always with her. It kept watch beside the body when she was dead, and refused to be driven away. In a fit of exasperation Lautenschlager seized it, carried it off, and drowned it in the little River Mumling, at a place where the road from Michelstadt to the neighbouring village Steinbach runs near the water's edge. It was bordered with poplars then, but chestnut trees shade it now.

“Soon after his first wife was buried Lautenschlager married again, and opened an eating-house in Steinbach, where he established his second wife. He had a sister whom he placed in the cottage of poor ‘Pfeiffe Louise.’ She carried on the business, and every day Lautenschlager used to walk over from Steinbach to see how she was getting on, returning in the evening to his wife, who used to relate to my mother that he frequently came home terrified and bathed in perspiration, for as he passed the place where he had drowned the cat, its ghost used to come out of the river and run beside him along the dark road, sometimes terrifying him still more by jumping in front of him.

“After a few years of married life the second wife died, and Lautenschlager married a third. The little cottage business had prospered, and in its place he now had a considerable draper's shop in Michelstadt. He continued to walk over from Steinbach, where now the third wife lived in the eating-house, and the ghost of the cat continued to frighten him by appearing at nightfall as he walked beside the river.

“I can remember hearing his third wife describe his dread of it, and my mother has told me how both the sister and the second wife used to say the same thing, though I was too young then for them to tell me about it. Lautenschlager used also to complain to the country people who came to dine at his eating-house. He considered himself an ill-used man, and felt that the supernatural powers were treating him very hardly, and subjecting him to a real persecution. I have only the conversation of his wife and the gossip of the village to vouch for his sincerity, and the genuineness of the apparition is supported only by Lautenschlager's word, but his evident anger and agitation were accepted as genuine, and no one dreamed of doubting his word. He was not at all a dreamy or imaginative man, and did not drink. His passion was merely momentary. He was not only a draper and caterer but a usurer, and realized something of a fortune by lending money on good security to peasants and farmers who, it was said, did not consider how they bound themselves when they signed the papers he put before them.

Lautenschlager continued to be haunted by the cat-ghost at irregular intervals for more than twenty years, and it made a marked change in his character. He became serious, and during the latter part of his life would only talk about religion and read sacred literature. He died about ten years ago.”

“FELINE.”

LETTER 7

A Spectral Fox-terrier

Two or three years ago I visited a medium (Mrs. Davies of 44 Laburnum Grove, Portsmouth). I had been seated only a few minutes when a little pug-dog of hers boked up in the direction of my knees and down towards my feet, growling and howling in a most strange manner.

“What on earth is he looking at?” I exclaimed.

“Oh,” said the medium, “there is a little foxterrier lying across your feet; one half of his face is quite dark and the other half white, but he has such a peculiar black patch over the eye that one would almost think it was a black bruise.” Now, sir, I had such a little dog in India, but this lady did not know of him, and would never have known had he not, as I afterwards found, died out there. This is not only a case of the appearance of an animal after death, but also a case in which it was seen by another animal, as also by the medium. I am also told that the pug-dog who had this vision of my dog was once seen to pounce upon what seemed to the medium to be several cats, near the copper in the scullery of the same house. The medium asked a neighbour if the previous occupants had had any cats. “Oh, yes,” replied the neighbour, “and badly the poor things were served, for they were cruelly thrown into the copper, which was full of boiling water.”

“SIMLA” (M. Conder).

LETTER 8

Killed by a Street Car, but walks in at the Front Door

Some five years ago we had a little puppy about six months old. I used to train him to always go round the back way to come into the house. One day he got hurt and run over, being instantly killed by a street car. A day or two after the accident I was going in my front door and I saw the dog go up the steps in front of me, as plain as I ever saw him in my life. It seemed he knew that I had taught him he must not go in the front way, because he would go a few steps and then turn round and look at me, as though he wanted to see how I was taking it, and I positively saw him go to the full length of the hall into the house, a distance of about twenty feet, before he disappeared. I saw him do this at least three times in two months that we stayed in that flat. I told at least a half-dozen people of the incident at the time it happened, and I can vouch for its authenticity.

I remain, yours truly,

“MAJILTON”

(Chas. A. Thompson, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.).

LETTER 9

Mrs. Vincent Taylor's Experience. A Spirit Purr

One evening in February, 1906, my son and I were quietly reading, in full gaslight, our small grey cat lying on the sofa a short distance from where I sat. Suddenly I saw on my knee a large red and white cat which belonged to us in India, which was a very dear family friend and as fond of us as a child.

On leaving India we were obliged to give him to a friend, and in the end he shared the usual fate of pets in that country, making a meal for some wild animal.

Rufie-Oofie," in his spirit shape, purred vigorously, rubbing his head against me and giving every sign of delight at seeing us again. I did not speak, but in a few minutes my son looked up and said, "Mother, Rufie-Oofie is on your knee," when the spirit cat jumped down and went to him to be petted. Then he returned to me, and walked along the sofa to where our present cat, "Kim," was asleep. The spirit cat, with a look of almost human fun, patted Kim's head, the latter awaking with a start. Rufie-Oofie continued to make playful dabs at Kim's ears, Kim following each movement with glaring eyes, distinctly seeing and realizing that another cat was invading his sofa, but not in the least angry with him and quite ready to play. After a few minutes the spirit cat came back to my knee, whereupon the earth cat displayed jealousy which Rufie-Oofie resented, but before they came to actual "words" the spirit cat retired behind the veil.

LETTER 10

SIR,

The following notes of psychological experiences with animals may be of interest I had a collie who lived to a good old age. She was deaf and infirm, and one hind-leg was paralysed, so that it dragged as she walked. I was taken ill, not seriously, nor so as in any way to affect my brain, but as my poor old dog would insist on coming and lying in my room the doctor insisted on her being destroyed. I felt that her life was no pleasure to her, and she was killed with chloroform. Three days afterwards in the afternoon I heard her come upstairs with her dragging hind-leg. I heard her steps come along the long passage which had my room at the end, and lost them about half-way up. On the third day I called her and spoke to her, putting out my hand as if she would come and put her head under it, and told her all was right. I never heard her any more.

I believe that on one occasion she told me by thought transference that she had no water in her pan. The pan was always filled, and I knew that she wanted something, but thought of all other wants but water. She made her eyes protrude, and looked at me intently, and "water" flashed into my mind. I looked and found the pan empty. It is, of course, possible that the suggestion came from my own subconscious mind. I never saw the aura of a human being, but I once had a kind of vision of this dog, which experts have told me was her aura. I was sitting by the fire, somewhat somnolent, and he was lying on the hearthrug. All at once his golden brown coat disappeared, and I saw a mass of reddish brown or perhaps I should say brownish red, and on one side of it was an irregular patch of fleecy white, bordered with sapphire blue. I was told that the brownish red represented the dog's animal instincts, the pearly white his animal innocence, and the sapphire blue his devotional instinct, in his case directed to me as his deity. Whether any of your readers have had similar experiences and explain them similarly, I do not know.

I had to go abroad one summer and my dog was ill with eczema, and as I did not very much trust the maid I was leaving in charge, I sent him to the vet's to be treated. As soon as I reached my destination I wrote to a friend to go and inquire how he was. She replied that the dog was perfectly miserable, and that he had an enormous wound on his back, that he had eaten nothing for a week, that he was too weak to stand, and that if he were hers, she would have him put out of his misery at once. I wrote at once to the vet, telling him to telegraph "Curable" or "Hopeless," and to act accordingly. Meanwhile, I sat that afternoon in the Burgerpark by myself and imagined the dog upon my lap, and myself stroking and healing him. After this I found myself fully believing that he would get better. The telegram I received was "Curable," and my friend wrote a second letter and said it was a miracle, for the dog was quite convalescent. He recovered

perfectly. Here, again, however, it may have been that he was breaking his heart for a friend, and that my friend's visit cheered him. Or may not both causes have had their effect?

“AMBROSE ZAIL MARTYN.”

Here is another case in the veracity of which I have every confidence. I will call it

*The Headless Cat of No. — Lower Seedley Road,
Seedley, Manchester*

It was related to me by Mr. Robert Dane, who was at one time a tenant of No. — Lower Seedley Road, Seedley. I quote it as nearly as possible in his words, thus:—

“When we—my wife and I—took No. — Lower Seedley Road, no possibility of the place being haunted crossed our minds. Indeed ghosts were the very last things we reckoned on, as neither of us had the slightest belief in them. Like the generality of solicitors, I am stodgy and unimaginative, whilst my wife is the most practical and matter-of-fact little woman you would meet in a day's march. Nor was there anything about the house that in any way suggested the superphysical. It was airy and light—no dark corners nor sinister staircases—and equipped throughout with all modern conveniences. We began our lease in June—the hottest June I remember—and nothing occurred to disturb us till October.

It happened then in this wise. I will quote from my diary

“*Monday, October 11th.*—Dick—that is my brother-in-law—and I, at 11 p.m., were sitting smoking and chatting together in the study. All the rest of the household had gone to bed. We had no light in the room—as Dick had a headache—save the fire, and that had burned so low that its feeble glimmering scarcely enabled us to see each other's face. After a space of sudden and thoughtful silence, Dick took the stump of a cigar from his lips and threw it in the grate, where for a few moments it lay glowing in the gloom.

‘Jack,’ he said, ‘you will think me mad, but there is something deuced queer about this room to-night—something in the atmosphere I cannot define, but which I have never felt here—or indeed anywhere—before. Look at that cigar-end—look!

I did so, and received a shock. What I saw was certainly not the stump Dick had had in his mouth, but an eye—a large, red and lurid eye—that looked up at us with an expression of the utmost hate.

“Dick raised the shovel and struck at it, but without effect—it still glared at us. A great horror then seized us, and unable to remove gaze from the hellish thing, we sat glued to our chairs staring at it. This state of affairs lasted till the clock in the hall outside struck twelve, when the eye suddenly vanished, and we both felt as if some intensely evil influence had been suddenly removed.

“Dick did not like the idea of sleeping alone, and asked if he might keep the electric light on in his room all night. Tremendous extravagance, but under the circumstances excusable. I confess I devoutly wished it was morning.

“*Tuesday, October 12th.*—I was awakened at 11.30 p.m. by Delia saying to me, ‘Oh, Edward, there have been such dreadful noises on the landing, just as if a cat were being worried to death by dogs. Hark! there it is again.’” And as she spoke, from apparently just outside the door, came a series of loud screeches, accompanied by savage growls and snarls.

“Not knowing what to make of it, as we had no animals of our own in the house, but concluding that a door or window having been left open, a dog and cat had got in from outside, I lit a

candle, and opened the bedroom door. Instantly the sounds ceased and there was dead silence, and although I searched everywhere, not a vestige of any animal was to be seen. Moreover all the doors leading into the garden were shut and locked, and the windows closed. Not wishing to frighten Delia, I laughingly assured her the cat—a black Tom—was all right, that it was sitting on the roof of the summerhouse, looking none the worse for its treatment, and that I had sent the dog—a terrier—flying out of the gate with a well-deserved kick. I explained it was my fault about the front door being left open—my brain had been a bit over-strained through excessive work—and asked her on no account to blame the servants. I grow alarmed at times when I realize how easy lawyering makes lying.

“*Friday, October 21st.*—On my way to bed last night I encountered a rush of icy cold air at the first bend of the staircase. The candle flared up, a bright blue flame, and went out. Something—an animal of sorts—came tearing down the stairs past me, and on peering over the banisters, I saw, looking up at me from the well of darkness beneath, two big red eyes, the counterparts of the one Dick and I had seen on October 11th. I threw a matchbox at them, but without effect. It was only when I switched on the electric light that they disappeared. I searched the house most carefully, but there were no signs of any animal. Joined Delia, feeling nervous and henpecky.

“*Monday, November 7th.*—Tom and Mable came running into Delia’s room in a great state excitement after tea to-day. ‘Mother!’ they cried, ‘Mother! Do come! Some horrid dog has got a cat in the spare room and is tearing it to pieces.’ Delia, who was mending my socks at the time, flung them anywhere, and springing to her feet, flew to the spare room. The door was shut, but proceeding from within was the most appalling pandemonium of screeches and snarls, just as if some dog had got hold of a cat by the neck and was shaking it to death. Delia swung open the door and rushed in. The room was empty—not a trace of a cat or dog anywhere—and the sounds ceased! On my return home Delia met me in the garden. ‘Jack!’ she said, ‘I have probed the mystery at last. The house is haunted! We must leave.

“*Saturday, November 12th.*—Sublet house to James Barstow, retired oil merchant, to-day. He comes in on the 30th. Hope he’ll like it!

“*November 15th.*—Cook left to-day. I’ve no fault to find with you, mum,’ she condescendingly explained to Delia. ‘It’s not you, nor the children, nor the food. It’s the noises at night—screeches outside my door, which sound like a cat, but which I know can’t be a cat, as there is no cat in the house. This morning, mum, shortly after the clock struck two, things came to a climax. Hearing something in the corner and wondering if it was a mouse—I ain’t a bit afraid of mice, mum—I sat up in bed and was getting ready to strike a light—the matchbox was in my hand—when something heavy sprang right on the top of me and gave a loud growl in my ear. That finished me, mum—I fainted. When I came to myself, I was too frightened to stir, but lay with my head under the blankets till it was time to get up. I then searched everywhere, but there was no sign of any dog, and as the door was locked there was no possibility of any dog having got in during the night. Mum, I wouldn’t go through what I suffered again for fifty pounds; I’ve got palpitations even now; and I would rather go without my month’s wages than sleep in that room another night.’ Delia paid her up to date, and she went directly after tea.

“*Friday, November 18th.*—As I was coming out of the bathroom at ii p.m. something fell into the bath with a loud splash. I turned to see what it was—there was nothing there. I ran up the stairs to bed, three steps at a time!

“*Sunday, November 20th.*—Went to church in the morning and heard the usual Oxford drawl. On the way back I was pondering over the sermon and wishing I could contort the Law as successfully as parsons contort the Scriptures, when Dot—she is six to-day—came running up to

me with a very scared expression in her eyes. 'Father,' she cried, plucking me by the sleeve, 'do hurry up. Mother is very ill.' Full of dreadful anticipations, I tore home, and on arriving found Delia lying on the sofa in a violent fit of hysterics. It was fully an hour before she recovered sufficiently to tell me what had happened. Her account runs thus:—

“ ‘After you went to church,’ she began, made the custard pudding, jelly and blancmange for dinner, heard the children their Collects, and had just sat down with the intention of writing a letter to mother, when I heard a very, pathetic mew coming, so I thought, from under the sofa. Thinking it was some stray cat that had got in through one of the windows, I tried to entice it out, by calling “Puss, puss,” and making the usual silly noise people do on such occasions. No cat coming out and the mewling still continuing, I knelt down and peered under the sofa. There was no cat there. Had it been night I should have been very much afraid, but I could scarcely reconcile myself to the idea of ghosts with the room filled with sunshine. Resuming my seat I went on with my writing, but not for long. The mewling grew nearer. I distinctly heard something crawl out from under the sofa; there was then a pause, during which you could have heard the proverbial pin fall, and then something sprang upon me and dug its claws in my knees. I looked down, and to my horror and distress, perceived, standing on its hind-legs, pawing my clothes, a large, tabby cat, without a head—the neck terminating in a mangled stump. The sight so appalled me that I don't know what happened, but nurse and the children came in and found me lying on the floor in hysterics. Can't we leave the house at once?’

“*Wednesday, November 30th.*—Left No. — Lower Seedley Road at 2 p.m. Had an awful scurry to get things packed in time, and dread opening certain of the packing-cases lest we shall find all the crockery smashed. Just as we were starting Delia cried out that she had left her reticule behind, and I was despatched in search of it. I searched everywhere—till I was worn out, for I know what Delia is—and was leaving the premises in full anticipation of being sent back again, when there was a loud commotion in the hall, just as if a dog had suddenly pounced on a cat, and the next moment a large tabby, with the head hewn away as Delia had described, rushed up to me and tried to spring on to my shoulders. At this juncture one of the servants cautiously opened the hall door from without, and informed me I was wanted. The cat instantly vanished, and on my reaching the carriage in a state of breathless haste and trepidation, Delia told me she had found her reticule—she had been sitting on it all the time!”

In a subsequent note in his diary a year or so later Mr. Dane says “After innumerable enquiries *re* the history of No. — Lower Seedley Road prior to our inhabiting it, I have at length elicited the fact that twelve years ago a Mr. and Mrs. Barlowe lived there. They had one son, Arthur, whom they spoilt in the most outrageous fashion, even to the extent of encouraging him in acts of cruelty. To afford him amusement they used to buy rats for his dog—a fox-terrier—to worry, and on one occasion procured a stray cat, which the servants afterwards declared was mangled in the most shocking manner before being finally destroyed by Arthur. Here, then, in my opinion, is a very feasible explanation for the hauntings—the phenomenon seen was the phantasm of the poor, tortured cat. For if human tragedies are re-enacted by ghosts, why not animal tragedies too? It is absurd to suppose man has the monopoly of soul or spirit.”

The Cat on the Post

In her *Ghosts and Family Legends* Mrs. Crowe narrates the following case of a haunting by the phantom of a cat:—

After the doctor's story, I fear mine will appear too trifling," said Mrs. M., "but as it is the only circumstance of the kind that ever happened to myself, I prefer giving it you to any of the many stories I have heard.

"About fifteen years ago I was staying with some friends at a magnificent old seat in Yorkshire, and our host being very much crippled with the gout, was in the habit of driving about the park and neighbourhood in a low pony phaeton, on which occasions I often accompanied him. One of our favourite excursions was to the ruins of an old abbey just beyond the park, and we generally returned by a remarkably pretty rural lane leading to the village, or rather small town, of C—.

"One fine summer's evening we had just entered this lane when, seeing the hedges full of wild flowers, I asked my friend to let me alight and gather some. I walked before the carriage picking honeysuckles and roses as I went along, till I came to a gate that led into a field. It was a common country gate with a post on each side, and on one of these posts sat a large white cat, the finest animal of the kind I had ever seen; and as I have weakness for cats I stopped to admire this sleek, fat puss, looking so wonderfully comfortable in a very uncomfortable position, the top of the post, on which it was sitting with its feet doubled up under it, being out of all proportion to its body, for no Angola ever rivalled it in size.

" 'Come on gently,' I called to my friend; 'here's such a magnificent cat!' for I feared the approach of the phaeton would startle it away before he had seen it.

" 'Where?' said he, pulling up his horse opposite the gate.

" 'There,' said I, pointing to the post. 'Isn't he a beauty? I wonder if it would let me stroke it?'

" 'I see no cat,' said he.

" 'There on the post,' said I, but he declared he saw nothing, though puss sat there in perfect composure during this colloquy.

" 'Don't you see the cat, James?' said I in great perplexity to the groom.

" 'Yes, ma'am; a large white cat on that post.'

"I thought my friend must be joking, or losing his eyesight, and I approached the cat, intending to take it in my arms and carry it to the carriage but as I drew near she jumped off the post, which was natural enough, but to my surprise she jumped into nothing—as she jumped she disappeared! No cat in the field—none in the lane—none in the ditch!

" 'Where did she go, James?'

" 'I don't know, ma'am. I can't see her,' said the groom, standing up in his seat and looking all round.

"I was quite bewildered; but still I had no glimmering of the truth; and when I got into the carriage again my friend said he thought I and James were dreaming, and I retorted that I thought he must be going blind.

"I had a commission to execute as we passed through the town, and I alighted for that purpose at the little haberdasher's; and while they were serving me I mentioned that I had seen a remarkably beautiful cat sitting on a gate in the lane, and asked if they could tell me who it belonged to, adding it was the largest cat I ever saw.

"The owners of the shop, and two women who were making purchases, suspended their proceedings, looked at each other and then looked at me, evidently very much surprised.

" 'Was it a white cat, ma'am?' said the mistress.

" 'Yes, a white cat; a beautiful creature and—'

" 'Bless me!' cried two or three, 'the lady's seen the white cat of C—. It hasn't been seen these twenty years.'

“ ‘Master wishes to know if you’ll soon be done, ma’am. The pony is getting restless,’ said James.

“Of course I hurried out, and got into the carriage, telling my friend that the cat was well known to the people at C—, and that it was twenty years old.

“In those days, I believe, I never thought of ghosts, and least of all should have thought of the ghost of a cat; but two evenings afterwards, as we were driving down the lane, I again saw the cat in the same position and again my companion could not see it, though the groom did. I alighted immediately, and went up to it. As I approached it turned its head and looked full towards me with its soft mild eyes, and a friendly expression, like that of a loving dog; and then, without moving from the post, it began to fade gradually away, as if it were a vapour, till it had quite disappeared. All this the groom saw as well as myself; and now there could be no mistake as to what it was. A third time I saw it in broad daylight, and my curiosity greatly awakened, I resolved to make further enquiries amongst the inhabitants of C—, but before I had an opportunity of doing so, I was summoned away by the death of my eldest child, and I have never been in that part of the world since.

“However, I once mentioned the circumstance to a lady who was acquainted with that neighbourhood, and she said she had heard of the white cat of C—, but had never seen at.

This is Mrs. M.’s account as related by Mrs. Crowe, and after perusing the authoress’s preface to the work, I am inclined to give it full credence.

The Mystic Properties of Cats

The most common forms of animal phenomena seen in haunted houses are undoubtedly those of cats. The number of places reported to me as being haunted by cats is almost incredible—in one street in Whitechapel there are no less than four. This state of affairs may possibly be accounted for by the fact that cats, more than any other animals that live in houses, meet with sudden and unnatural ends, especially in the poorer districts, where the doctrine of kindness to animals has not as yet made itself thoroughly felt. Now I am touching on the subject of cat ghosts, it may not be out of place to reproduce the following article of mine, entitled “Cats and the Unknown,” which appeared in the *Occult Review* for December, 1912:—

“Since, from all ages, the cat has been closely associated with the supernatural, it is not surprising to learn that images and symbols of that animal figured in the temples of the sun and moon, respectively, in ancient Egypt. According to Horapollo, the cat was worshipped in the Temple of Heliopolis, sacred to the sun, because the size of the pupil of the cat’s eye is regulated by the height of the sun above the horizon.

“Other authorities suggest a rather more subtle—and, in my opinion, more probable—reason, namely, that the link between the sun and the cat is not merely physical but superphysical, that the cat is attracted to the sun not only because it loves warmth, but because the sun keeps off terrifying and antagonistic occult forces, to the influences of which the cat, above all other animals, is specially susceptible; a fact fully recognized by the Egyptians, who, to show their understanding and appreciation of this feline attachment, took care that whenever a temple was dedicated to the sun an image or symbol of the cat was placed somewhere, well in evidence, within the precincts.

“To make this theory all the more probable, images and symbols of the cat were dedicated to the moon, the moon being universally regarded as the quintessence of everything supernatural, the very cockpit, in fact, of mystery and spookism. The nocturnal habits of the cat, its love of

prowling about during moonlight hours, and the spectacle of its two round, gleaming eyes, may, of course, as Plutarch seems to have thought, have suggested to the Egyptians human influence and analogy, and thus the presence of its effigy in temples to Isis would be partially, at all events, accounted for; though, as before, I am inclined to think there is another and rather more subtle reason.

“From endless experiments made in haunted houses, I have proved to my own satisfaction, at least, that the cat acts as a thoroughly reliable psychic barometer.

“The dog is sometimes unaware of the proximity of the Unknown. When the ghost materializes or in some other way demonstrates its advent, the dog, occasionally, is wholly undisturbed—the cat never. I have never yet had a cat with me that has not shown the most obvious signs of terror and uneasiness both before and during a superphysical manifestation.

“Now, although I won’t go so far as to say that ghostly demonstrations are actually dependent on the moon—that they occur only on nights when the moon is visible—experience has led me to believe that the moon most certainly does influence them—that moonlight nights are much more favourable to ghostly appearances than other nights. Hence—there is this much in common between the moon and cats—the one influences and the other as influenced by psychic phenomena—a fact that could scarcely have failed to be recognized by so keen observers of the occult as the Ancient Egyptians.

“The presence of the cat’s effigy in the temples of Isis might thus be explained. Over and over again we come across the cat in the land of the Pharaohs. It seems to be inseparable from the esoteric side of Egyptian life. The goddess Bast is depicted with a cat’s head, holding the sistrum, i.e. the symbol of the world’s harmony, in her hand.

“One of the most ancient symbols of the cat is to be found in the Necropolis of Thebes, which contains the tomb of Hana (who probably belonged to the Eleventh Dynasty). There, Hana is depicted standing erect, proud and kingly, with his favourite cat Borehaki—Borehaki) the picture of all things strange and psychic, and from whom one cannot help supposing he may have chosen his occult inspiration—at his feet. So sure were the Egyptians that the cat possessed a soul that they deemed it worthy of the same funeral rites they bestowed on man. Cats were embalmed, and innumerable cat mummies have been discovered in wooden coffins at Bubastis, Speos, Artemidos and Thebes. When a cat died the Egyptians shaved their eyebrows, not only to show grief at the loss of their loved one, but to avert subsequent misfortune.

“So long as a cat was in his house the Egyptian felt safe from inimical supernatural influences, but if there was no cat in the house at night, then any undesirable from the occult world might visit him. Indeed, in such high esteem did the Egyptians hold the cat, that they voluntarily incurred the gravest risks when its life was in peril. No one of them appreciated the cat and set a higher value on its mystic properties than the Sultan El-Daher-Beybas, who reigned in A.D. 1260, and has been compared with William of Tripoli for his courage, and with Nero for his cruelty. El-Daher-Beybas kept his palace swarming with cats, and—if we may give credence to tradition—was seldom to be seen unaccompanied by one of these animals. When he died, he left the proceeds from the product of a garden to support his feline friends—an example that found many subsequent imitators. Indeed, until comparatively recently in Cairo, cats were regularly fed, between noon and sunset, in the outer court of the Mehkemeh.

“In Geneva, Rome and Constantinople, though cats were generally deemed to have souls and to possess psychic properties, they were thought to derive them from evil sources, and so strong was the prejudice against these unfortunate animals on this account, that all through the Middle Ages we find them suffering such barbaric torture as only the perverted minds of a fanatical,

priest-ridden people could devise (which treatment, no doubt, partly, at all events, accounts for the many palaces, houses, etc., in those particular countries, stated to have been haunted the spirits of cats).

“The devil was popularly supposed to appear in the shape of a black Tom in preference to assuming any other guise, and the bare fact of an old woman being seen, once or twice, with a black cat by her side was quite sufficient to earn for her the reputation of a witch. It would be idle, of course, to expect people in these un-meditative times to believe there was ever the remotest truth underlying these so-called phantastic suppositions of the past; yet, according to reliable testimony, there are, at the present moment, many houses in England haunted by phantasms in the form of black cats, of so sinister and hostile an appearance, that one can only assume that unless they are the actual spirits of cats, earthbound through cruel and vicious propensities, they must be vice-elementals, i.e. spirits that have never inhabited any material body, and which have either been generated by vicious thoughts, or else have been attracted elsewhere to a spot by some crime or vicious act once perpetrated there. Vice-elemental is merely the modern name for fiend or demon.

“Apart from his luciferan qualities, the cat was awarded all sorts of other qualities, not the least important of which was its prophetic capability. If a cat washed its face, rainy weather was regarded as inevitable; if a cat frolicked on the deck of a ship, it was a sure sign of a storm whilst if a live ember fell on a cat, an earthquake shock would speedily be felt. Cats, too, were reputed the harbingers of good and bad fortune. Not a person in Normandy but believed, at one time, that the spectacle of a tortoiseshell cat, climbing a tree, foretold death from accident, and that a black cat crossing one’s path, in the moonlight, presaged death from an epidemic. Two black cats viewed in the open between 4 and 7 a.m. were generally believed to predict a death; whereas a strange white cat, heard mewling on a doorstep, was loudly welcomed as the indication of an approaching marriage. According to tradition, one learns that cats were occasionally made use of in medicine; to cure peasants of skin diseases, French sorcerers sprinkling the afflicted parts with three drops of blood drawn from the vein under a cat’s tail; whilst blindness was treated by blowing into the patient’s eyes, three times a day, the dust made from ashes of the head of a black cat that had been burned alive.

“Talking of burning cats reminds me of a horrible practice that was prevalent in the Hebrides as late as 1750. It was firmly believed there that cats were extraordinarily psychic, and that a sure means of getting in close touch with occult powers, and of obtaining from them the faculty of second sight—such as the cat possessed—was to offer up as sacrifices innumerable black cats. The process was very simple. A black cat was fastened to a spit before a slow fire and as soon as the wretched animal was well roasted, another took its place; victims being supplied without intermission, until their vociferous screams brought to the scene a number of ghostly cats who joined in the chorus. The desired climax was reached, when an enormous phantom cat suddenly appeared, and informed the operator that it was willing to grant him any one request if he would only refrain from his cruel persecution. The operator at once demanded the faculty of second sight—a power more highly prized in the Hebrides than any other—and the moment it was bestowed on set free the remaining cats. Had all races been as barbarously disposed as these occult-hungry Westerners, cats would soon have become extinct; but it is comforting to think that in some parts of the world a very different value was set on their psychic properties.

“In various parts of Europe (some districts of England included) white cats were thought to attract benevolently disposed fairies, and a peasant would as soon have thought of cutting off his fingers, or otherwise maltreating himself, as being unkind to an animal of this species. In the

fairy lore of half Europe we have instances of luck-bringing cats—each country producing its own version of Puss in Boots, Dame Mitchell and her cat, the White Cat, Dick Whittington and his cat, etc. It is the same in Asia, too for nowhere are such stories more prolific than in China and Persia.

“To sum up—in all climes and in all periods of past history, the cat was credited with many propensities that brought it into affinity and sympathy with the supernatural—or to quote the up-to-date term—superphysical world. Let us review the cat to-day, and see to what extent this past regard of it is justified.

“Firstly, with respect to it as the harbinger of fortune. Has a cat insight into the future Can it presage wealth or death? I am inclined to believe that certain cats can at all events foresee the advent of the latter; and that they do this in the same manner as the shark, crow, owl, jackal, hyena, etc., viz, by their abnormally developed sense of smell. My own and other people’s experience has led me to believe that when a person is about to die, some kind of phantom, maybe, a spirit whose special function it is to be present on such occasions, is in close proximity to the sick or injured one, waiting to escort his or her soul into the world of shadows—and that certain cats scent its approach.

“Therein then—in this wonderful property of smell—lies one of the secrets to the cat’s mysterious powers, it has the psychic faculty of scent—of scenting ghosts. Some people, too, have this faculty. In a recent murder case, in the North of England, a rustic witness gave it in her evidence that she was sure a tragedy was about to happen because she “smelt death in the house,” and it made her very uneasy. Cats possessing this peculiarity are affected in a similar manner—they are uneasy.

“Before a death in a house I have watched a cat show gradually increasing signs of uneasiness. It has moved from place to place, unable to settle in any one spot for any length of time, had frequent fits of shivering, gone to the door, sniffed the atmosphere, thrown back its head and mewed in a low, plaintive key, and shown the greatest reluctance to being alone in the dark.

“This faculty—possessed by certain cats—may in some measure explain certain of the superstitions respecting them. Take, for example, that of cats crossing one’s path predicting death.

“The cat is drawn to the spot because it scents the phantom of death, and cannot resist its magnetic attraction.

“From this, it does not follow that the person who sees the cat is going to die, but that death is overtaking someone associated with that person; and it is in connection with the latter that the spirit of the grave is present, employing, as a medium of prognostication, the cat, which has been given the psychic faculty of smell that it might be so used.

“But although I regard this theory as very feasible, I do not attribute to cats, with the same degree of certainty, the power to presage good fortune, simply because I have had no experience of it myself. Yet, adopting the same lines of argument, I see no reason why cats should not prognosticate good as well as evil.

“There may be phantoms representative of prosperity, in just the same manner as there are those representative of death; they, too, may also have some distinguishing scent (flowers have various odours, so why not spirits?) and certain cats, i.e. white cats in particular, may be attracted by it.

“This becomes all the more probable when one considers how very impressionable the cat is—how very sensitive to kindness. There are some strangers with whom the cat will at once make friends, and others whom it will studiously avoid. Why? The explanation, I fancy, lies once more

in the occult—in the cat’s psychic faculty of smell. Kind people attract benevolently disposed phantoms, which bring with them an agreeably scented atmosphere, that, in turn, attracts cats. The cat comes to one person because it knows by the smell of the atmosphere surrounding him, or her, that it has nothing to fear—that the person is essentially gentle and benignant. On the contrary, cruel people attract malevolent phantoms, distinguishable also to the cat by their smell, a smell typical of cruelty—often of homicidal lunacy (I have particularly noticed how cats have shrunk from people who have afterwards become dangerously insane). Is this sense of smell, then, the keynote to the halo of mystery that has for all times surrounded the cat—that has led to its bitter persecution—that has made it the hero of fairy lore, the pet of old maids? I believe it is—I believe that in this psychic faculty of smell lies, in degree, the solution to the oft-asked riddle—why is the cat uncanny? Having then satisfied oneself on this point, namely, that cats are in the possession of rare psychic properties, is it likely that the Unknown Powers which have so endowed them, should withhold from them either souls or spirits? Is it not contrary to reason, instinct, and observation to suppose that the many thoroughly material and grossly minded people—people whose whole beings are steeped in money worship—we see around us every day should have spirits, and that pretty, refined and artistic-looking cats, whose occult powers place them in the very closest connection with the superphysical, should not? Monstrous—the bare conception of such incongruity in the one case, and such an omission in the other, is inconceivable, wholly irreconcilable with the notion of any other than a nummer of a creator—a mere court fool of a God.”