

PUSSY

AND

Her Language



MARVIN R. CLARK.



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**PUSSY
AND
HER LANGUAGE**

**BY
MARVIN R. CLARK**

Including a Paper on the Wonderful Discovery
of the Cat Language by

ALPHONSE LEON GRIMALDI, F.R.S., etc.

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PUSSY AND HER LANGUAGE.

I.

“IT WAS THE CAT.”

When, in the fable, that humorous progenitor of the human species, according to that slicker, slyer and still more humorous, practical joker, Darwin, the monkey, cast about him in a sudden emergency for some useful utensil adequate to the purpose of pulling his chestnuts out of the fire, his selfish ambition was rewarded by the sight of no less distinguished a person than the Cat. Notwithstanding the piteous protests and flowing tears of Pussy, she was forced into the service of the monkey, and ever after there lived in the memory of man that wonderful story, from which we get the expressive saying of "making a cat's paw" of anything or anybody.

The cruelty of the act and the subsequent greed of the simian who, despite the appeals of the feline for a share in the delicious roast, gave her nothing but the smell, of which he could not have deprived her, appeals to the indignation of a just public. But the suffering and the tears and the cries of the Cat command the sympathy of all right-minded people who rest in peace under the "Banner of Freedom," and fight against oppression. The moral is demonstrative, as you will see.

The presiding genius who carries the portfolio and administers the affairs of the most important of all the divisions of the household—the culinary department—the cook, wisely appreciates the inestimable value of the Cat, and never fails to make convenient use of the animal, even employing her upon occasions when Pussy becomes nothing short of a miracle-worker. Of course, the reader may differentiate the story with common sense, but rarely, for the word of the queen of the realm of the culinary department is as the

verity of the Law and the Gospel. The mistress may wonder, and a smile of incredulity may pass over the countenance of the master of the house, but the breakage of crockery and the lavish disappearance of spirits, wine and ale, the wonderful growth of the butcher's bill, the prodigal wanderings of butter not strong enough to sustain its own weight, the overdone appearance of the breakfast steak, and the underdone appearance of the dinner joint are attributable only to the household pet, for the cook hath said "It was the Cat!" Even when the mistress sadly discovers the queen of the sacred domain, who has the power to poison the food she dispenses, lying prone upon the kitchen floor at the dinner hour, the fumes of the best brandy escaping from her stentorian lungs and her limbs limp as fresh putty, the bouquet of the spirits of 1840 comes to the sensitive nostrils of the lady laden with the murmurings of the cook, "It was the Cat!" and the faithful mistress intuitively realizes that there has been a battle royal between the queen regent and the agent of the king of that realm where ice appeareth not, and all skating is done upon rollers.

When the extensive disappearance of the family preserves causes inquiry, and the heir of the house is questioned concerning his knowledge of the loss, he unhesitatingly and solemnly declares that "It was the Cat!" which is in the usual course of events, and always to be believed, even when it is noted by the nurse that the nose of the urchin resembles, in color, that of a man whose ways are not those of the temperate, and smelleth of strawberry jelly, and his chin resembleth that of one who has but recently been thickly coated with raspberry jam.

Now, mark the moral. We loudly censure the monkey in the fable, and smile at the charges of the others, not pausing to consider that the sufferings of the flesh are endurable, but the tortures of the mind from undeserved censure are frequently beyond endurance. The great lover of the Cat, Shakespeare, as if the wrongs of the calumniated feline in his mind aptly expresses the feelings of the Cat, when he says, through the medium of Othello:

"Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

"Give a dog a bad name, and you send him to"—the place not hung with icy stalactites. It is a solemn and well-known fact that one of a million dogs gets a bad name, while not one out of a million Cats gets a good one. It is out of the shadow of this cruel prejudice that I would lead the Cat, and place her upon the pedestal to which she should have been raised for the admiration of the world, long, long ago.

II.

A LITTLE INNOCENT WHO KNOWS THE FAMILY SECRETS.

When a startling discovery which virtually concerns every atom of humanity has been rounded into a fact, so that the average human intellect may grasp and, after thoroughly comprehending its value, make the proper application of it, the sooner it is given to the world for the benefit of the human race, if benefit there be in the discovery, the better for the world and all that are upon it.

Such a fact, and one which will go far to revolutionize society, has certainly been discovered, and, I hope, may be presented in so clear and comprehensive a manner that "he who runs may read," and readily realize its vast importance to the world, although its development will, undoubtedly, spread the greatest alarm wherever it is made known.

It will not be denied, when I make the assertion, that in every household, in the hovel of the poorest as well as in the mansion of the richest, in the storehouse, the factory, the workshop, the mill, the foundry, the newspaper office, the schoolhouse, the hospital, the theatre, the counting-room, the great libraries, the ships and the political headquarters, even in the grand capitol buildings at Washington, and penetrating, without hindrance, into the very secret Cabinet meetings at the White House, and almost everywhere throughout the whole inhabitable globe, there exists a spy upon whose ears fall the secrets of a nation, which, if breathed at some inopportune moment, might be its ruin. With an air of insouciant nonchalance, this ever-present spy meanders everywhere and, with ears alert to catch the softest whisper, gives token only of a feeling of innocuous desuetude when scenes and secrets of the most astounding character are being developed to the understanding.

From time immemorial these facts have existed with the knowledge and consent of everybody, but, strangely enough, without a thought that it might be possible for the Cat to communicate the secrets thus surreptitiously obtained through the careless confidence of humanity.

The safety of such confidences lies entirely in the assumption of what has hitherto been regarded as a fact, and, although such utterances have been made in the presence of this universal spy, there was no possibility of their communication to the outer world because of its lack of power to do so. The astonishment following the recent discovery lies in the fact that this overweening confidence of man has been sadly misplaced, for I may state with the firmest faith in the proofs which have been presented to me, that, notwithstanding the belief to the contrary, the whole world has been misguided and the ever-present feline community has a language of its own, and, further, that it has become intelligible to more than one individual, myself among the number.

The importance of this startling discovery cannot be overestimated. It vitally concerns every human being in the known world, as may readily be perceived after a moment's thought. The possibility of the existence of a language as a means of communication of thoughts and ideas between animals has, for ages, been a subject of comment with many, while to those whose association with and fondness for the animal kingdom cannot but admit that there is no doubt concerning the truth. In fact, innumerable evidences of signs and verbal communications between what are incorrectly stigmatized as dumb beasts are constantly being demonstrated to the world but, unfortunately, described as evidences of instinct, although bearing every proof of thought emanating from the soul as uttered by the human being.

I may be considered as aiming too high in my declaration of what I shall proceed to prove, but it is with a firm belief that I shall be fully able to substantiate my assertion and convince the reader. Such wonderful evidences of the astonishing sagacity of animals have come to the knowledge of every man and woman that, when these instances are remembered, I consider myself well on the road toward demonstrating the assertion that there is a language of communication between animals.

Explain to me, if you can, why, if they do not possess souls, when shrouded

in slumber, the horse will neigh and prance, the Cat will cry, the lion will roar, the monkey will chatter and the dog will bark and whine while dreaming, even as a human being will give evidence of a restless mind when the animal senses are dormant.

Some years ago I possessed a dog who learned, without instruction and with little difficulty, to turn the knob and thus gain admission through the outer door of my house to the interior. Last Winter I was in possession of two Skye terriers, to whom I frequently remarked in a quiet tone of voice, in the morning, that I would take them out for a walk in the afternoon, and, at the hour when they had been taken out by me upon previous occasions, they invariably put their noses together and communicated their ideas. As a result of such communication first one and then the other, then both worried me with their paws and called to me unceasingly, until I kept my word with them. These are but two of the countless instances which have come under my observation, as numberless cases have been met with by others, proving, beyond denial, that these and other animals are as fully possessed of memory as is that nobler animal, man.

Call it instinct, if you will, but is that not to be considered as more than instinct which prompts the Cat to distinguish between the friend and the enemy of its master and mistress, and even to protect them from the attacks of an enemy at the risk of the life of the animal? The number of such instances is legion. Surely the faithfulness of our domestic animals cannot be doubted, but we may doubt the humanity of man to the animal kingdom when the evidence of the same senses in what are termed the lower animals is said to be instinct, while in the human it is called soul and mind.

It has frequently been remarked by those who have made a study of the animal kingdom that the intelligence of the lower animals, in many matters, is far superior to that possessed by human beings. For instance, the natural, living, breathing barometer is a Cat, and there are none better. When a Cat washes herself in the ordinary manner, we may be sure of bright, sunshiny weather, but when she licks herself against the grain of her fur or washes herself with her paw over the ear, or sits with her tail to the fire, there will be a storm.