

Do Cats Kill Babies?

The old superstition that "cats sometimes kill infants by sucking their breath" has lately revived in a paper in a Portland paper, in which it is stated that a baby was recently found dead in that city, with a large cat lying upon it. The Tribune shows that it would be almost impossible for a cat to kill a child by sucking its breath. Alluding to the Portland case he says:

"I do not doubt the death of the child was caused by something else at the time, but that a cat sucked its breath, or would or could do so, must be regarded as a piece of gross superstitious ignorance; as such it is hurtful and ought not to pass unchallenged. The author of the article therefrom subjects himself to great ridicule, otherwise, if they were easy to refute, the accusation made, which I do not see need for the first time."

"Let me say, then, that a cat could have no possible motive for sucking a child's breath, even if it were possible for so. The breath of a child is after all just as disagreeable and polluting as ours, and we know of no creature with a liking for children."

"Are we to suppose that the cat applied in life closely to those of those children, and exhausted the lungs of the latter by filling its own? If so, what next? The cat must breathe or die. If it is breathing, the child will breathe also and die." It is easy to see that the cat places its mouth in such proximity to that of the child, so as to intercept the pure air and so "suck" in that which the child required. This would involve the death of the cat, for the smaller animal and the child's mouth must also be in the proper position to intercept the air required by the cat. The latter, after all, may, in humanity or affection, would voluntarily suffer such affliction, is of course absurd.

"In fact, the statement is absurd altogether, and it would require the lowest, crassest ignorance of the way in which the act was performed, and that by a disinterested observer, to entitle the assertion even to consideration hereinafter."

The true explanation of the case is doubtless very simple. The cat lay upon the child's mouth, and so smothered it, or its own stomach and chest, and by its own tightness gradually ceased to act, and the poor little infant to breathe. Let me say, in conclusion, that such accidents are frequently inflicted by the carelessness in which mothers and parents have their children, deeply imbedded in soft clothes and pillows, depriving them, by doing of a full supply of the fresh pure air, which is their very life.

A Rich Scene in a Smoking Car.

An amusing incident occurred recently in a smoking car of a C. C. & I. R. train between Shreve and this city. A woman with a poodle dog entered the car just prior to the departure of the train from the former point, and after depositing her dog on one seat, turned over the back of another, so that each seat had two dogs. Together she and her canine companion thus monopolized two entire seats.

Appearances seemed to indicate that the car was one exclusively for the convenience of those addicted to the vice of smoking. But this fact was soon apparent to the conductor, who advised her to obtain a seat in another car, informing her at the same time that the accommodations in the smoking car in other coaches were superior to those where she was then. However she insisted on remaining, urging that her presence would deter the other passengers from smoking, and she would be compelled to experience no discomfort from tobacco fumes. Long before the train reached this city, however, a gentleman sitting directly in front of her, and who was taking frequent cigar-begnafing away at it in a manner which seemed peculiarly calculated to aggravate the "strong-minded" woman immediately packed up. In an instant, by a strategic movement, she wrested the obnoxious cigar from his mouth, and threw it out of the window, exclaiming at the same time saying, "If there is anything I do hate, it is tobacco smoke."

The passengers who had witnessed the affair were convulsed with laughter, but the offending smoker supposed that whatever emotions may have been struggling for expression in words or action, were concealed throughout the scene of inexpressible gravity, which had characterized him from the first. Calmly rising from his seat, he opened the window, and after having turned it up, and reached over the seat back of him, took that woman's poodle dog and threw him out of the window and as far beyond as possible. At the same time saying, "If there is anything I do hate, it's a poodle dog."

The scene which followed beggars description. The car resounded with peal after peal of laughter, and no one except the parties of the affair became apparently the principal actors in it, they too joined with the rest. Despite the recent incident to the loss of her dog, the woman could not repress her inclination to laugh at the unexpected folly of the affair.—Oleander Times.

A shocking story comes from Africa. A treaty having recently been concluded between the King of Bonny and the King of Opobo, it was, in accordance with the ancient custom, ratified by sacrificing a slave in a very peculiar manner. When the victim had been laid down over the trunk an incision was made half way, was made, then several stout men seized hold of the victim, while some others hacked the body along the line indicated through the incision. One half of the body was torn off by the King of Bonny, and the other half by the Ambassador of King Opobo, flung into the air by which the combat was considered to have ended. King Bonny tried very earnestly to make this useless and cruel part of the ceremony, but the Africans were not to be dissuaded from abandoning the time-honored usage. The victim, however, did not appear much disturbed by the fate that was for him. His consolation was that his butcher would be paid with the same coin in the next world.

The Sergeant-at-arms of the Senate has already sent to Senators the greater portion of their quotas of public documents, which are to be distributed among the Senate and the extra force of men employed for this purpose is being rapidly reduced. Several of the Senators have sent their boxes as freight, declining to make use of the franking privilege. —Washington Star, May 21.

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