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## A CAT THAT CATCHES FISH

(Washington Post.)

The National Zoo is to be congratulated on having, within the past few days secured specimens of the Caomietal and Eyra cats, animals of the feline family that, until about 1892, were unknown to science. Without doubt they are the most remarkable and curious of all animals of the feline family. Thus far specimens of these cats have never been exhibited in any of the zoos of this country and Europe, and the three just received are the first animals of the kind ever seen in the zoological gardens of the world. Like the Kawiak bear, the okapi, the giraffe with five horns, and the pigmy hippopotamus of Sierra Leone, their peculiar little animals have remained hidden from the explorer and the naturalist down to within a few years of the twentieth century, and in consequence the story of their discovery is well worth relating.

The Caomietal cat differs from all other members of the cat tribe in having a very long body, long neck, and, in proportion to the rest of the body, a small weasel-like head, with slightly tapering muzzle. The body is long and stands about one and one-fourth feet at the shoulders, while the tail, proportionately longer than in any known member of the cat family, exceeds the length of the whole body by almost a foot. The legs are decidedly long, making this cat the greyhound, so to speak, of the feline race. A more graceful and active animal it would be hard to imagine, yet there is something about the animal, something in its general make-up that at once remind one of an otter or a mink. With a body like that of a dachshund, set in long still-like legs, its long neck, small head and long, sweeping tail all contribute to make a very singular animal.

That which still further gives the animal an otter-like appearance is its small ears, which have a somewhat backward turn. In the matter of color the Caomietal cat differs from the general run of cats, in being of a rather dark Maltese color, or, more properly speaking, the color is pretty much the same shade as the domestic Maltese cat. In its habits the Caomietal cat differs from other felines quite as much as in color and form. The lion is the king, not only of cats, but of beasts in general; the tiger is a hunter on a large scale; the lynx is a sort of bird collector and rabbit fancier; the serval is a high jumper and all-round athlete, but the Caomietal cat deals exclusively in fish. The habitat of the Caomietal cat is along the bank of the Rio Grande river, in both Mexico and Texas, from the mouth up to about Eschsch's Falls, and extends north and south into the interior of the two countries only a short distance.

They are nocturnal animals, hiding away during the daytime in dens which they make for themselves in the dense mat of tall grass growing from the rich soil of the river banks, but coming out at night to fish. This Caomietal cat does not prowl along the bank and perch himself on the trunk of a tree overhanging the water, in much the same manner that a domestic cat catches a rat hole, waiting until some unlucky fish appears on the surface, when, with a spring almost as quick as a bolt of lightning, he plunges into the water, seizes the fish and swims ashore to devour his prey.

In the water the Caomietal cat is quite in his element. With his long, sinuous, otter-like body, he swims with perfect ease and grace, while his short, close, smooth, pelage offers no resistance to the fluid through which he moves with such surprising facility. In fact, he is one member of the cat family that not only does not object to going into the water, but rather prefers it to the land. He spins and yowls and uses his teeth and sharp claws just as other cats do, and is as difficult to tame as the worst tiger that ever lived.

From the home of the Caomietal cat down through South America to the Caas as far as Paraguay there are other cats that are varieties of variations of the Felis Caomietal, although none of them is quite like the Caomietal cat. The difference is that the latter fish and less are more cat and less otter than the Rio Grande variety. Of these one is the Eyra cat, another very rare and recently discovered animal that succeeds the Caomietal cat in Northern Mexico and ranges south through the latter country into South Mexico. In South America the Eyra cat is succeeded by the Yaguaroni cat, which ranges down into Paraguay, but no further.

The Eyra cat is not quite so heavy and more cat-like head and ears, shorter legs, more robust body and a shorter tail. The head, shoulders and neck are a bright olive yellow, shading into a rich buff, and then into a sort of reddish-bronzed Maltese over the back and flanks. The Felis Yaguaroni of South America is a trifle larger than either of the former and habits. It is of a dull brownish color. The last two, like the first, are also night animals, but prey more upon birds, poultry, snails, animals, etc., than they do upon fish, and seldom go about the water.

The Yaguaroni cat was first discovered by the old Jesuit naturalist Azara at the time that Orellana engaged in setting up missions for the Indians in Paraguay and Brazil, and he gave it the name that it now bears. He describes it in his book on the fauna of La Plata Valley, and when the scientific men who sixty years ago accomplished the survey of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Mexican boundary survey heard of the natives of the Rio Grande Valley of the existence of the Caomietal cat they concluded from its description that the Indians of the Yaguaroni cat, so grateful the matter in the reports they wrote on their return to the East.

It was not, however, until about ten years ago that the zoologists of the National Museum were able to secure a specimen of the Rio Grande animal, which is now to be seen stuffed and mounted in the museum at Washington, and when this happened they saw at a glance that it was not the Yaguaroni cat of Azara, but an entirely new animal. The Indians of the Rio Grande Valley called the animal "Caomietal," a word of doubtful or unknown significance, and with due regard for local terms, the zoologists forthwith named the animal "Felis Caomietal."

namely, the majority of those who are at all familiar with the animal continue still to speak of the latter as the "Yaguaroni cat," just as people further east persist in calling a certain variety of marmot a "ground hog," when there is no hog about it, for the same general reason that the animal was first known under such a name. On viewing the unusually fine pair of Caomietal cats at the Zoo most people would be inclined to the view that this species represents a departure from the normal of the cat family, and that in the Caomietal cat one sees a case of adaptation of an extreme form; that is to say, in time past the Caomietal cat has been driven by stress of circumstances, or necessity, to get its living out of the water. Those individuals that, in form, were more like others, could swim faster, dive better and see fish quicker, survived, and thus in the struggle for existence finally evolved a race of cats with bodies and heads like those of an otter or mink. Inhabited the dense tropical jungles, instead of this being the case, the Caomietal cat is the most primitive form of the feline race in the world, and that the Caomietal cat has been widely modified from the generality of felines that are now known, the Caomietal cat has, of all members of its family, changed the least in the centuries since the dawn of the present geological period. The reason for this view is as follows:

It is a fact well known to geologists and paleontologists that, instead of being the "New World," North America is, in reality, the oldest dry land on the globe, and the region in which the old parent forms of the horse, elephant, mammoth, and cat family, whose modified offspring migrated into Asia, Africa and Europe via the Behring Strait route thus becoming extinct on this continent were first evolved.

The parent of all modern cats, such as the tiger, leopard, puma, jaguar, lynx, ounce, etc., was one of the several animals that, in the Eocene period, inhabited the dense tropical jungles surrounding the great fresh water lakes, where now are the great plains of the West, in the underlying rock of which remains are now found. This strange animal, paleontologists have named *Pariotifelis ferax*, which, literally translated from scientific Latin, is "ferocious or wild father cat." There is, of course, no way of telling just what the old original father cat looked like; whether he was striped like the tiger, or spotted like the leopard, or other have concluded are the most primitive of all cat markings; but, although as large as a modern lion, we do not know by an examination of its bones, that in form and habits it bore closer resemblance to the Caomietal cat than to any other of its modern descendants.

While the skull, teeth and certain other points show plainly that it was a cat of the cats, there are one or two of the bones, notably those of the shoulder and hips, so strikingly those of the seal that when they were first taken for those of some animal of the seal or sea lion kind, nor was this view upset until the rest of the remains were examined.

Moreover, the caudal vertebrae showed that the animal had a tail like an otter, while other things contributed to prove that it was a feline. The first question that arises in the mind of the modern descendant, was an amphibious animal, spending most of its time in the water. Now, although the Caomietal cat does not go to the extreme of having a single bone suggestive of or resembling those of the seal or otter, yet in form and habit it is more like the old original parent cat than any other feline, and for that reason has probably undergone fewer modifications from the original form than any of the modern cats known to science.

The Eyra cat and the pair of Caomietal cats now at the National Zoo are a significant, full grown specimens of their species, and were obtained by the management from a dealer in Texas.

**A LATE ENGLISH VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES**

In an editorial issued recently in the British Iron Trade Association, the British Trade Review points out that "the importance of the United States of America as a factor in the industrial world is recognized by all who have knowledge of present-day conditions. Some of the most recent developments have caused something like a panic in the industrial nations of Europe, and their results are being watched with the keenest interest in the countries of the far east and the British Colonies. In these days of acute competition of the figure as regards trade industry will be chiefly of an economic nature, and questions of tariff will be more important than the details of technical operations. The resources of the United States of America are so enormous, the influence of tariff conditions so great, and the magnitude of financial and industrial combinations so immense, that they present an altogether new set of problems to the economists and the statesmen. The former must not only reconsider their conclusions, they must review the whole of their procedure and found their reasoning on assumptions which are more in harmony with actual conditions than the ordinary postulates of political economy. The latter must improve upon the empirical methods of the past and take seriously to the study of industrial dynamics, and not only ascertain the forces at work, but also as far as possible estimate their probable results. In a recent article in the London Times observed: 'The shipping combination illustrates a truth taught by all history when properly read, though concealed by all history as usually taught. The truth that the larger interests of nations are mainly worked out by economic forces, which politicians rarely understand and still more rarely have any capacity to control. The shipping combination indicates a shift in the economic center of gravity. It is not a freak of Mr. Morgan's. It is not a whim of American men of business. It is a movement of a sort or kind of hostility to this country. It is the expression and the consequence of pre-existing conditions and of economic movements that have been going on under our noses. As a nation we do not look at such things. Our politicians are too busy with the trumpery affairs of party squabbles and the infinite verbosity of the House of Commons. The public at large are, in

plain English, not educated enough to consider such things. Anyone who dwells upon them is postponed to a crank or an alarmist. But movements do not stop because people refuse to see them; all that happens is that the people are tremendously startled when the door which has been scolded and gradually closing finally shuts with a bang. Unless individuals and nations take a wide view of the industrial problems, which they are interested in, they will find themselves swamped by the great economic movements which are everywhere revolutionizing economic conditions.

"For some time past all who study industrial evolution have been struck with the rapid changes which are taking place in the United States and have warned the people of Europe to be prepared for the rest of these changes. It cannot be said that much attention has been paid to their words, but now the force of circumstances is compelling attention to the developments.

In some respects the Americans are ahead of other people in having improved machinery and methods of working. Their labor-saving appliances are developed to an extraordinary extent, they have greater facilities for the conveyance of traffic both by land and water, they have lower railway rates and greater elasticity in their application of money to the exigencies of the trade and greater freedom of contract between masters and men. Moreover, they have an educational system which is more complete and thorough than that of Britain, and added to all, there is an amount of naive energy and determination to get on and to make the best of their opportunities, which is apparent in all classes, combined with a system (which men are paid by results. These things have placed America far ahead of the other producing centres of the world.

Our contemporary concludes with this paragraph: "At the same time we must not omit to mention that there is another side to the picture. Local and municipal conditions in America are very often far from being as they ought to be—bad water supply, dirty and badly paved streets, imperfect drainage and railway trackage, municipal administration neglected, the most capable and distinguished men. Learned leisure is almost unknown. The man who is not actively engaged in business is apt to be idle. Local and municipal conditions in America are very often far from being as they ought to be—bad water supply, dirty and badly paved streets, imperfect drainage and railway trackage, municipal administration neglected, the most capable and distinguished men. Learned leisure is almost unknown. The man who is not actively engaged in business is apt to be idle. 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