

AND NOW--BEWARE THE CAT

From Cleveland Comes the News That Pussy Spreads Tuberculosis.

OLD TABBY, for countless generations the symbol of hearthside contentment, has had aspersions cast upon her. She is accused of no less heinous an offense than being a menace to the family whose home she shares.

This serious and surprising indictment recently came from Cleveland, Ohio:

"Dr. W. L. Ensor of Lakewood, who has dissected more than 100 cats in six months, says the animals spread tuberculosis and are a menace to the family. His investigations began when one of his patients contracted consumption, and he was satisfied a cat brought it to the house. He said he found tuberculosis germs in all the cats, and 30 per cent. of them were in a serious condition from the disease."

This item had no sooner appeared in the morning newspapers than the telephones in the various cat and dog hospitals began to jingle their peremptory summonses. Anxious voices made inquiry in this fashion:

"Tootsie—that's my cat's name, doctor—has been coughing all morning. She coughs just like this. [Here followed a ladylike imitation of a sick cat.] Do you think it possible that Tootsie has developed tuberculosis? I gave her chicken bones for dinner yesterday. Isn't it possible that they irritated her throat? No. Well, I took her collar off the day before when I gave her her bath. She may have caught just a little cold, don't you think? I'll bring Tootsie down to your hospital anyway. You'd better see her. It's the only sure way. I don't want the little dear to die of tuberculosis."

In the course of the day a reporter for THE TIMES visited what is perhaps the biggest and the longest established cat and dog hospital in this city. As he sat and talked to the doctor in charge there were frequent interruptions from the telephone. It was a revelation to the reporter to discover how many cats there

are in New York that are owned, that have some one to worry over their health, some one to pay their doctor's bills.

"No," said the doctor, "I don't take much stock in the Cleveland story. We opened this hospital in 1901, and since that time we have handled over 40,000 cats and dogs. Among all these cases I have never yet seen one of advanced tuberculosis. If the disease were anywhere near as common as Dr. Ensor says it is, why, it stands to reason that we would have discovered a considerable number of advanced cases.

"Now, with the monkeys it's different. It's well known that they are often afflicted with tuberculosis, and I have seen many that plainly show that they are in the advanced stages of the disease.

"There was one period that stretched over about three years when we performed from 75 to 100 post-mortem examinations a month on dogs and cats. It was only in the very rarest instances that the lungs gave any tubercular indications.

"Of course, a mere post-mortem is by no means conclusive. To be certain of the presence or absence of tubercle bacilli there must be a microscopic examination and chemical test. These have been made to a scientific extent only in Germany.

"Let me refer you to Friedberger and Fröhner, the celebrated German veterinary pathologists."

The doctor took a big, impressive-looking book down from his shelves and left the reporter to cogitate these paragraphs:

"Although tuberculosis is not a very rare disease in dogs and cats, it does not occur so frequently in them as in cattle and pigs. Cats in large towns are especially liable to become affected. In Berlin, out of 100 sick cats one was tuberculous. Nocard observed tuberculosis in a cat which had been fed experimentally

with milk that contained tubercle bacilli. But as a rule the source of infection, as in dogs, is obtained from a tuberculous owner.

"During the last few years more than 100 cases have been observed in dogs. Its frequency appears to vary greatly in different countries and towns. Among 70,000 dogs which, from 1886 to 1894, entered the Berlin clinic, forty, that is to say 0.05 per cent., were affected. A similar number was found among the 9,000 canine patients at the Alford clinic during the years 1891 to 1893, thus giving a percentage of 0.44, which is about nine times more than in Berlin. Out of 400 in Dresden, eleven were tuberculous.

"The reception of tubercle bacilli in dogs takes place most frequently by means of the lungs, which consequently are often found, post mortem, to be tubercular than other organs.

"Infection in them, as in man, is generally transmitted by inhaling tubercular dust in rooms. Less frequently the tubercle bacilli are received through the digestive apparatus in consequence of swallowing tubercular food.

"As in human beings, canine tuberculosis runs a chronic course usually in the form of pulmonary phthisis. In many cases no conspicuous external symptom of the disease can be perceived, even for a very long time, on which account owners often remain unconscious of the fact during the life of the animal. The symptoms vary greatly according to the site, extent, and age of the tubercular changes. Usually the disease assumes the aspect of chronic pneumonia or bronchial catarrh.

"We usually learn that the patient has suffered for a considerable time from cough and increasing emaciation. The phthisical appearance of the owner may lead us to suspect tuberculosis in the dog. An exact diagnosis is, however, possible only by bacteriological examination."