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**In A  
Country  
Lane**

By Lillian Collier Gray

Amusing incidents have a habit of happening to everyone! Two happened here this past week. A cat came to us. And a runaway cow frightened our city visitor.

I don't know why the arrival of a cat should be funny. Excepting that we do not like cats. Definitely and violently we do not like cats. Maybe we are missing something by our unfriendly attitude to this "mystery of the jungle" — a magazine article warns us we are. But we're just stubborn and unreasonable enough to continue hating the slant-eyed felines anyway. The main reason for our dislike is that we love birds. Cats eat birds. Therefore we hate cats.

Well, one morning recently a black cat and white feline was on our doorstep. She arched her back and rubbed her head against the screen door and said "hello" in a much too friendly fashion. I snapped, "Now where did you come from?" In my most frigid voice. Mrs. Cat (she was that kind of a cat) arched her back still higher and rubbed the door more ingratiatingly than ever. I cruelly shut the door in her face. I scolded the manager because a cat had arrived! As if he were to blame for the mistake. hunches of a cat! "She'll eat birds," I threatened him darkly. "Feed her and she won't," he suggested sensibly. "Then she'll be sure to stay," I protested. "I won't feed her." I didn't for a few hours. But every time I stepped outside the kitchen door, there she was. Fawning, pleading, scolding, swearing. I fed her. She was very hungry. There was only one name for Mrs. Cat, I decided. It was Matilda Jane. She was that kind of a cat. Matilda Jane was touchingly grateful for her bread and milk. So much so that she parked placidly on the doorstep, tucking her paws luxuriously under her purring lovingly every time her yellow eyes caught a glimpse of me. My hateful glares had no effect upon her aroused affection. I knew we

were in for it. Matilda Jane had adopted us. But that isn't the half of our grief. It is only too painfully evident that one morning when we open our door we shall be greeted by six or seven little Matilda Janes. And then what. Sequel: Our city visitor, who thought she was chased by a runaway cow, has changed Matilda Jane's name, to Mehitable. She is that kind of a cat, too.

Our guest, a young lady from the city, arrived in a ballerina skirt and a frilly petticoat, but fortunately was wearing blue jeans when the cow episode took place. She had kindly offered to bring in the mail from the box at the gate. Clad in a red sweater over the jeans, she sauntered forth, in her bare feet, along the dappled drive, and no doubt listening to the bursts of bird song and revelling in the scenery as we do every time we go for the mail. Suddenly the sound of wild galloping came to our ears. That couldn't be our bare-footed Jeanie. We ran to the window, but all we could see was a bovine shape, whose gender we are still in doubt about, disappearing in a cloud of dust, and with a long-legged farm hand hanging to the rope from which Mr. or Mrs. Cow was plainly determined to escape. We both ran to the gate. The mind of the manager was no doubt filled with a noble resolve to save the gal, no matter how. I had a mental picture of the red sweater and shoulder-length curls being trampled in the dust. Or of a pair of frantic long legs clambering over the high wire fence. But no Jeanie was in sight! We stood and stared. Then the kitchen door opened, and out strolled Jeanie, unruffled and unperturbed. However, it is on the record that a wild dash had been made for another gate and the entry by a back door had been a trifle hasty and dishevelled. And moreover, in the flurry, Mehitable had very nearly had her tail stepped upon. I wish she had!

A cat and a cow! But more things than that happen in our country lane. Two clergymen have come to call, but both to see the people who lived here before us. They, our predecessors, apparently hadn't been able to make up their minds as to which flock they belonged to. Two salesmen, also called—one selling patent medicines and the other house insulation. We don't take patent medicines, and it isn't our house,

so we don't insulate. So no business was transacted. A junk man also stopped at the gate and blew his horn commandingly. We dislike motorists who blow horns at gates as much as we dislike cats, and treat them with equal disdain.

Between cats, cows, peddlers, and city visitors, no poem was written this week. But here is one I wrote one more leisurely week about bread.

**BREAD**

There's wonder in bread:  
 The slow-waking soil,  
 To sur: and to rain,  
 The small, shining grain,  
 The rite of hard toil.

There's wonder in bread:  
 The stars overhead,  
 And the lark in the field,  
 Where the grain golden yield  
 Urges all may be fed.  
 Lillian Collier Gray.

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