

MRS. STEAD'S SMOKE LITTER BY "RANJL."
(Photo: Russell & Sons, Baker Street.)

CHAPTER XIV.

SMOKE PERSIANS.



"JO" AND "TINY" (SMOKES).

(Photo: Gross, Brooklyn, N.Y.)

IT is only a good time will be in store for breeders of within re- this handsome variety.

Smokes may therefore be called a new breed, and it is a very distinctive one, made up, as it were, of the three self colours—black, white, and blue. It is a shaded cat without markings, the fur being pure white underneath and gradually assuming almost a black tone on the outer coat. The face, paws, and back down to the tip of the tail are the darkest parts, shading to a dark grey down the sides and on the under part of the tail. A very great beauty in smokes is the light frill and ear tufts, which lend an air of much distinction to this breed. The great failings in many smokes is the appearance of tabby markings; these especially mar the beauty of head and face, and take away from their value in the show pen. The tail should be quite free from any rims of light and dark, and should have the upper part an even dark colour, and underneath a cinder grey. Some smokes are so dense in the surface coat as to be really black cats with white under-coats, having none of the modulated grades of dark and light grey. These cats are often minus

class to themselves. They were formerly relegated to the "any other colour" class, and very often at smaller shows this is where we find the smokes penned. A really good smoke is a thing of beauty, and it seems certain that as the fancy expands and the Silver and Smoke Cat Society looks after their interests,

the light ear tufts and ruff, and therefore cannot be regarded as correct smokes. Then, again, there are light smokes which might almost be called silver smokes—very beautiful cats to look at, but far removed from the ideal smoke.

Perhaps at some future time there may be a special classification for these cats, which are now without an abiding place at our shows. It is most important that the coat of a smoke should be long and of the true Persian flakiness, otherwise the chief beauty of the contrast between the light under-coat and dark outer-coat is not seen to full advantage.

I think I may say without fear of contradiction that, of all long-haired breeds, smokes present the most altered and absolutely dishevelled appearance when out of coat. The glory of the light frill disappears, and multitudes of lines and streaks can be plainly discerned. Then a very rusty brown tinge appears on the back, and the rich, glossy black surface coat vanishes. I owned a lovely smoke cat once that at certain times of the year—and, I may say, for most part of the year—was nothing better than a bad black, his only claim to the title of smoke being the general appearance of a dark cat that had spent his life in an ashpit. But when "Pepper" was in full feather, he was a joy to behold.

It is curious that when the kittens are first born they appear almost a dead black, with no trace of a white under-coat. This appears gradually as the kittens grow, and at three weeks old the lighter coat becomes visible. Their faces and paws should be intensely black when born, as the tendency in smokes is to get lighter and not darker. If a kitten is born with the appearance of a smoke it will generally turn into what I have termed a silver smoke later on. As with black kittens, so with smokes: they are often very rusty in appearance, but this will disappear with their kitten coat. This also applies to tabby markings, though, of course, if there is any tabby blood in the

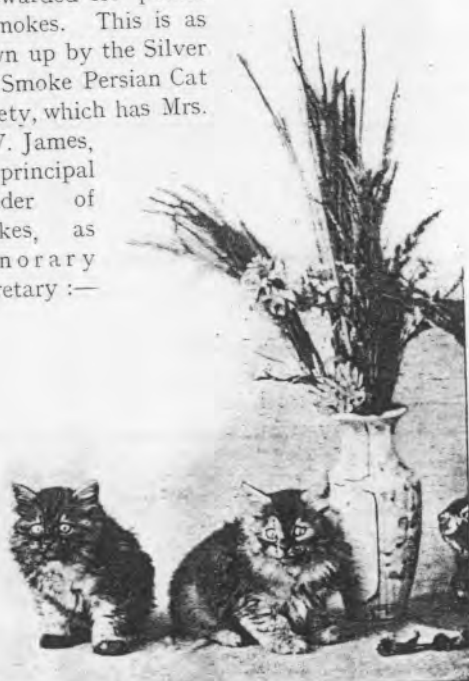
strain the markings may be retained. For this reason it is most undesirable to mate smokes with tabbies; neither is it advisable to select a blue as a cross. The blue tinge destroys the purity of the white under-coat, which is one of the glories of a perfect smoke. It is a case of "like to like" in breeding smokes, and, failing this, choose a good black sire for your queen with amber eyes. This is especially advantageous if your queen should be light in colour and throw light kittens; but if she is already too dark, mate with a chinchilla, avoiding, if possible, a green-eyed one.

Above all things shun, as you would Sin, tabbies of any colour, and let your choice fall on a heavily coated sire. I have been told by smoke fanciers that it is much more difficult to breed a good smoke female than a male, and that the latter sex predominates in litters.

I will here give the officially approved table showing the proportion of marks which should be awarded for points of smokes. This is as

drawn up by the Silver and Smoke Persian Cat Society, which has Mrs.

H. V. James, our principal breeder of smokes, as Honorary Secretary:—



MISS BARTLETT'S TWO SMOKE KITTENS.

(Photo: E. Landor, Ealing.)

SMOKES.

Smoke cats should be black, shading to smoke (grey), with as light an under-coat as possible; light frill and ear tufts; eyes to be orange.

Value of points :—

Head and expression	20
Colour of eye	15
Colour of under-coat	10
Absence of markings	15
Coat and condition	20
Tail	10
Shape	10
Total	100

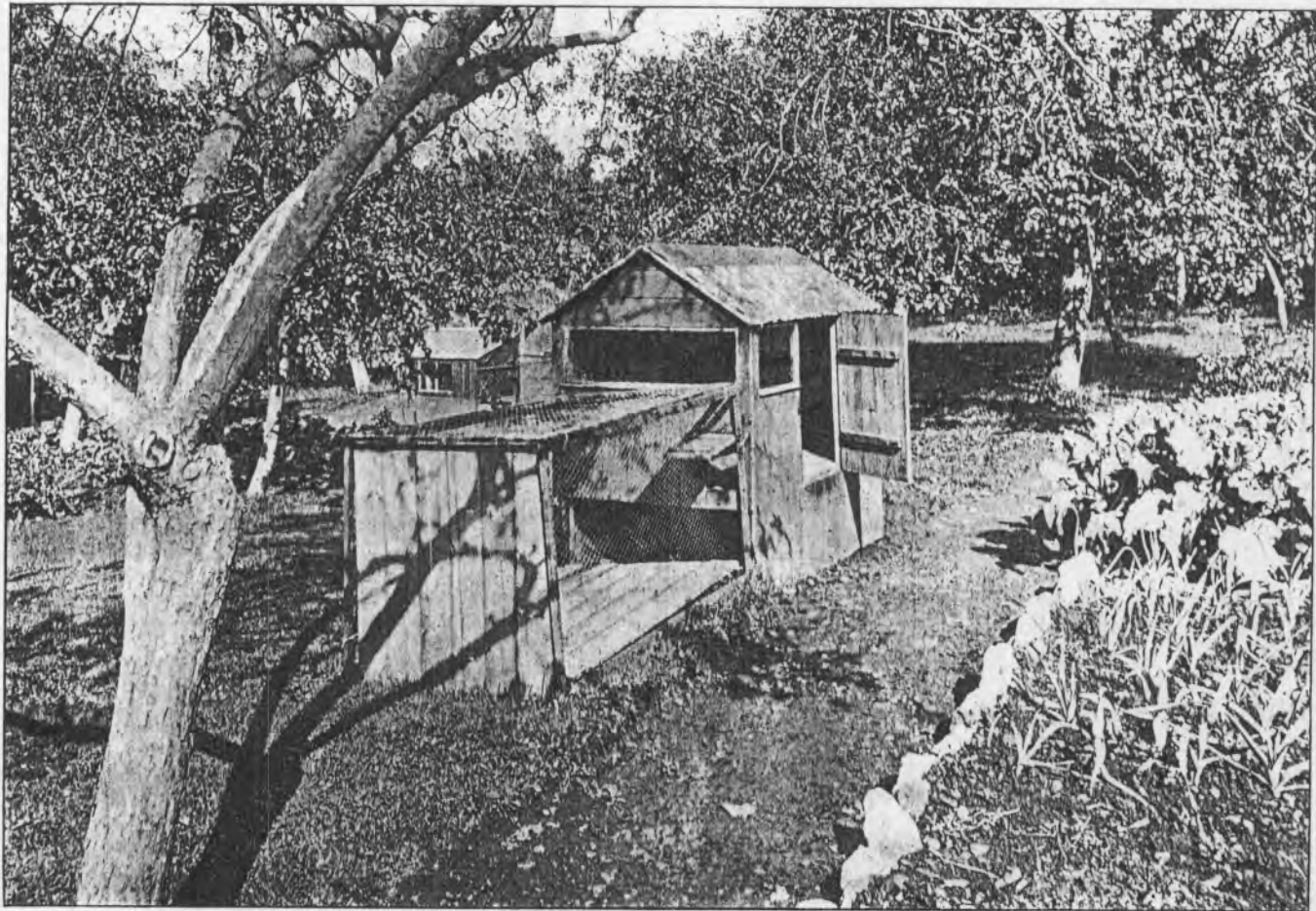
I think there are no fanciers or breeders of smokes who feel that any option should be given as to the colour of eyes in this breed, for, as in the black cats, the eyes should be amber or light golden. However, I must confess that brilliant green eyes are to be preferred to the pale yellow, which too often spoil the beauty of many of the smokes now exhibited. I should never place an indifferent smoke with orange eyes over a good specimen with eyes of emerald green. In the early days of the fancy, smokes were entered in the "any other variety" class, and were sometimes called Smoke Blues or Smoke Chinchillas.

In 1891 Miss Manley (now Mrs. Strick) exhibited a fine smoke called "Bayadère." Amongst the names of our oldest smoke breeders who still continue to breed I may mention Mrs. Cartwright, of Upwood. In 1895 this lady showed smokes at Cruft's show bred from her "Timkins." The Upwood cats are very pure in colour, having the dense outer coat very white at the roots. At one time the Lindfield smokes held their own everywhere, Miss Molony winning first at the Crystal Palace in 1893 with "Lindfield Bogie." Mrs. Bluhm, better known as a silver breeder, also owned about this time a famous smoke female called "Smuttie."

Mrs. Robert Little has for years combined the breeding of smokes with blacks. In 1897 "Namouska," a smoke female, won first at the Crystal Palace, and her descendants continue their career as first-class smokes. In more recent times the following are noted

winners: Lady Marcus Beresford's "Cossey," Mrs. H. V. James's "Backwell Jogram," Mrs. Sinkins' "Teufel," Mrs. Stead's "Ranji," Mrs. Stillwell's "Victoria," Miss Snell's "Dusky Girl," Mrs. Collingwood's "Minouche," Rev. P. L. Cosway's "Maritana," Mrs. Neild's "Silver Soot," Mrs. Hamilton's "Bulger," Miss Rose's "Judge." Perhaps the most consistent and successful breeder of smokes now in the fancy is Mrs. H. V. James, who started in 1893, and has been faithful to this breed ever since. I have had the pleasure of visiting Mrs. James's smoke cattery, and I felt that the lovely old-fashioned garden surrounding the Grange at Backwell was truly an ideal place for successfully rearing live stock of any kind, and all the pussies were pictures of robust health. I am glad to be able to insert the following valuable article on smoke Persians from the pen of Mrs. James, who is certainly our best authority on this breed.

"Before entering upon the distinctive points of smokes, I will give a short account of my smoke cattery, and how I first took up this breed. It is curious to look back and see what mere chances govern our actions. I have all my life been devoted to Persian cats of one colour or another, but never intended to go in for any special breed. However, in 1893 I purchased a blue kitten, which, on its arrival, appeared far from well. The man who sold it offered, if it died, to replace it. In a few days I was in a position to accept this offer, for the kitten succumbed, and another—which was also supposed to be a blue—was sent to replace it. As time went on this kitten darkened, and, much to my disgust, turned to a deep cinder colour. In 1894 there was a grand West of England Cat Show held at Bristol, and, to please an old servant who had taken great care of the kitten, I entered 'Jubilee.' I was not much up in cat showing then, but 'smoke' seemed to answer the description of the kitten better than any other colour; so into the smoke class he went, and, to my surprise, carried everything before him. This started



MRS. JAMES'S CAT HOUSES AT BACKWELL.

(Photo: F. Holmes, Clifton, Bristol)

my career as an exhibitor. I showed 'Jubilee' again at Cruft's and Brighton the next year, where he again carried off firsts, and was described as the best smoke cat seen since the days of the famous 'Mildew.'

"At the Palace in 1894, I bought a smoke female kitten from Miss Bray as a mate for 'Jubilee.' This mating proved successful, and I had several grand litters of smokes, most of which, I am sorry to say, went to swell the ranks of neuter pets, being given as presents to my friends. In time I learnt wisdom, however, and kept my smokes myself. 'Jubilee's' career as a show cat was unfortunately cut short after his Brighton win in 1894. He escaped one night, and in a fight with another cat had his ears so torn that I was unable to exhibit him again. A year later, when I was away from home, he was let out one day, and never returned, having, I expect, been trapped in the woods. At that period my smokes nearly died out, as I had only one litter a few weeks old by 'Jubilee.' Of the two smokes one was promised, and the other I kept, and he is still alive as 'Champion Backwell Jogram.' So I think I may consider I have had my share of luck, though, like most breeders, I have

had my bad times, and have lost sometimes as many as twelve cats and kittens in a few days from distemper, and once or twice a very promising female has strayed into the woods and been seen no more. I hope, however, that for some years, at least, 'Jubilee's' descendants will continue to flourish, as there are a number of 'Jogram's' kittens scattered over England, and several have left these shores for America.

"In mating my smoke queens I have several times tried a black sire, and have always been successful in getting good smokes from this cross. 'Jubilee II.' is an example, being by 'Johnnie Fawe,' Dr. Roper's famous black Persian. I have only once—years ago—tried a blue cross, but the result was a mixed litter of blacks and blues. I have found that all the blue queens mated with 'Jogram' have had chiefly blacks. Smokes may be considered a very hardy breed, perhaps from the fact that there has been little in-breeding so far. 'Jogram' lives in an unheated wooden house all the year round, and has never even had a cold. Kittens will also stand the same treatment.

"And now I will endeavour to give my ideas as to the points which go to make up a perfect smoke. A good smoke is perhaps one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful breeds of long-haired cats, a bad smoke one of the plainest. The novice—for whom this article is principally written—may therefore be glad to have a clear definition of a smoke to start with.

"The definition drawn up by the Silver Society when it first started reads as follows: 'A smoke cat must be black, shading to smoke (grey), with as light an under-coat as possible, and black points, light frill and ear tufts; eyes to be orange.' But the word 'black,' having sometimes led novices to suppose that a black cat possessed of a white under-coat is a smoke, it would be perhaps safer to say 'a smoke is a deep cinder-coloured cat shading to grey, with a white under-coat,' etc. In order to distinguish the difference between black and the true cinder-colour of the smoke,



MRS. A. M. STEAD'S SMOKE PERSIAN "CH. RANJI."
(Photo: E. N. Collins, S. Norwood.)

it is an excellent plan to keep a sound black cat in a smoke cattery.

"Smokes are, comparatively speaking, one of the newer breeds of long-haired cats, and arose from the crossing of blues, blacks, and silvers, and appeared as a freak in litters of blues or silvers, and, being beautiful, were kept by their owners. No serious attempt, however, was made to breed them until quite recently. If beauty and a hardy constitution count for much, they should be more popular even than they are at present; but no doubt the extreme difficulties of breeding a good, unmarked shaded cat deter many breeders from taking them up. With a whole-coloured cat it is fairly plain sailing when a strain, sound in shape and bone, has been established; but with a shaded cat it is quite another matter. Litter after litter of kittens appear, grand in shape, strong in limbs, apparently perfect in shading. In a few months the kittens moult, and the shading becomes perhaps a hopeless jumble of light and dark. Where it should be dark it has turned light, and *vice versa*. Still worse, the shading disappears, and the markings—the bugbear of all smoke breeders—appear, showing traces of the far-away silver tabby ancestors. These markings have perhaps been lying dormant for a generation, and appear as a reminder of the silver tabby origin of the smoke.

"To all smoke breeders who wish to succeed I would say, 'Never part with a well-shaped smoke until at least a year old, lest you find you have, in rejecting the apparently ugly duckling and keeping the gem, thrown away the substance for the shadow.' On the subject of mating, there is much to be said. I am afraid many owners of smoke queens mate with any coloured cat which takes their fancy in the hopes of getting something in the litter besides smokes.

"I have sometimes heard owners say, 'Oh! I mate my smoke queen with all sorts of colours. She always has one or two good smokes in each litter.' That may be true, but if a smoke strain is to be built up, you



"CHAMPION
BACKWELL JOGRAM."

are making a fatal mistake. The kitten thus bred goes to a new home and is expected to produce smokes as good as herself. She is mated with a smoke male, and when the litter arrives there are perhaps no smokes, she having thrown back to her sire, so as a breeder she is useless. Smoke to smoke must be the rule, except in special cases—when, for instance, the queen is on the light side; then a cross with a black may be found to be necessary. Or the queen may be too dark and given to breeding black kittens. Then the choice should fall on a silver as free as possible from silver tabby relations. On no account must a tabby of any colour be chosen or a sire with any white. A blue should also be avoided, as the under-coat is liable to take the blue shade and become blurred instead of *white* at the roots.

"Orange eyes are much prized in smokes, and I believe, from my own experience in breeding smokes for the last ten years, that it is from the mothers that the kittens get their eye colour. If the queen has pale green eyes you may mate her with all the orange-eyed sires in the kingdom, and the eyes will still be pale. But if the queen has deep orange eyes, the kittens will inherit them also, even should the sire have only pale eyes.

"Thanks to careful mating by some of our smoke breeders, smokes are not the flukes they once were, and a smoke queen, well

mated, may now be relied upon to produce whole litters of smoke kittens. As a rule, the kittens at birth are quite black, and remain so for a week or so; and my experience has been that if a kitten shows any trace of grey at birth, it will grow up too light. There are, however, a few well-known queens who throw almost silver kittens, which remain so for weeks, and then shed this kitten coat for a darker one; so no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down as to what a smoke kitten should look like when born. Try in-breeding for coat to avoid the sleek or woolly-coated smoke, and aim at getting a cat with a coat of the true Persian flakiness described by Mr. Harrison Weir in his book on Persian cats, otherwise the chief beauty—the light under-and dark outer-coat—is not seen to advantage as the cat moves. One point to be remembered in this breed is that the new coat growing is dark just at the roots. These marks, when the smoke is changing coat, have often been mistaken for tabby markings, so for this reason it is most unwise ever to show a smoke when out of coat. Wait until your cat is in full coat before accusing it of having tabby markings.

“There is a fashion in smokes, as in everything else; and at present in England the very dark smokes are the rage, but in America the light ones are more sought after. That grand cat ‘Watership Cæsar,’ who was considered too light for English taste, was last year bought by the late Mrs. Thurston and taken to America, where he carried off all the smoke honours, also taking the prize for the best cat in the show. The same happened to Lady Marcus Beresford’s ‘Cossey,’ a lovely cat of the lighter type. The tide may turn, however, even in England, where the slightly lighter smokes may share the honours with their darker brothers. It is better, however, to be on the safe side and breed for the darker smoke, as the lighter are apt to lose the smoke characteristics and overstep the line which divides them from a shaded silver.”

Mrs. Sinkins, to whom I have alluded as a

smoke breeder, owns a splendid stud cat called “Teufel” that has made a name for himself as a first prize winner. This cat is as nearly a perfect specimen as it is possible to find. Mrs. Sinkins has written a few notes on smokes.

“I must consider myself honoured in being asked to write about smoke Persians in ‘The Book of the Cat,’ as I am, comparatively speaking, a beginner in the cat fancy, only having kept Persians for three years or so. I began by buying a well-bred queen in kitten, and she presented me with two chinchillas and a perfect smoke female, which I named ‘Teuffella,’ and showed at Westminster in 1899. She carried all before her, winning everything in her class, and was claimed at once at catalogue price. From a silver half-sister of hers I then bred ‘Teufel,’ whose picture is in this issue, and who is a great pet, being extremely sweet-tempered and affectionate. His chief characteristics are his *absolutely unmarked* black face and the lovely white under-coat, so desirable in a perfect smoke, and for which he received a special this spring (1902) at Westminster. I hope some of his descendants will take after him in these respects and make smokes increasingly popular.

“In my opinion, it is a fatal mistake to mate smokes with blues, as they then lose this white under-coat. I think one obtains it best by mating a *smoke-bred* smoke cat with either a *silver-bred* smoke or else with a silver cat, as unmarked as possible, who possesses a smoke ancestor. Some day I should like to try mating a black with a pale silver, just as an experiment.

“As to eye colour, there can be no two opinions. The deeper the orange, the better.

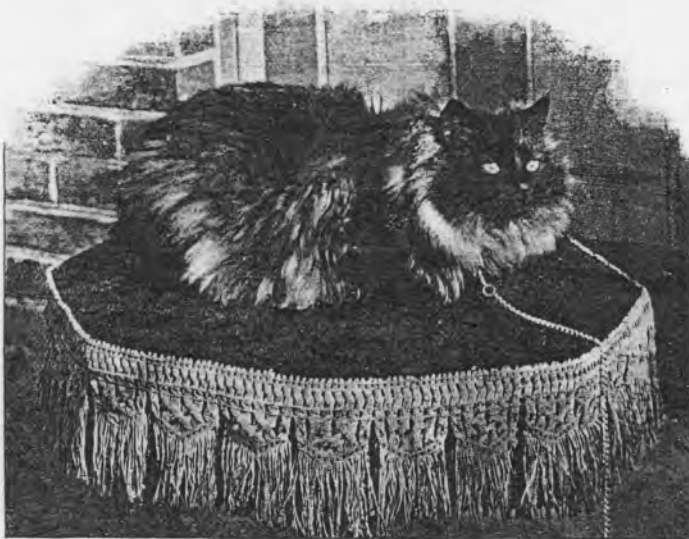
“I do not find smokes at all delicate, no more so than the common or garden cat. All my queens have entire freedom, one in particular being a first-rate ratter and mouser, even catching moles sometimes. And they live out of doors in unheated houses all the year round, even in the most severe winter.

“It seems hard that all Persians should have

to pass through an 'ugly' period—luckily a short one—when they change their coats, looking ragged and certainly not their best. Smokes and blacks then show the brown tinge even worse than chinchillas, as it gives them the poverty-stricken appearance of rusty moulting—though I must say 'Teufel' has so far been the exception, taking all honours at one show when in full moult.

"However, their good time fully com-

standard up to which I try to breed. I find the kittens go through several stages before they approach this perfection. For instance, a kitten I had in the spring of 1902 lightened considerably, and developed markings on the face, but at eight months old he was nearly up to the standard. A litter of six I have recently bred were entirely unmarked at birth, being, in fact, quite black. Five are now medium-coloured smokes, and one a very



MRS. SINKINS' SMOKE PERSIAN "TEUFEL."

pensates for the shabby period, and a typical smoke, with his large orange eyes set in his black face, with light ear tufts and frill, his white under-coat showing with every movement, is a thing of beauty hard to beat, and I feel sure the smoke variety has a great future before it."

Mrs. Stead, the owner of "Champion Ranji" and "Rhoda," a winning smoke female, has kindly given me her opinion on smokes:—

"My ideal of perfect smoke cats is that they should be black, shading to smoke grey, with as light an under-coat as possible, light frill and ear tufts, eyes orange. This is the

dark one, with beautiful light under-coat. I strongly advise all breeders not to despair of colouring until their kittens are fully grown. Permanent markings are, of course, very detrimental, and there is always great anxiety as to the final colour of the eyes. If, however, both parents are good in this respect, the result is generally satisfactory."

The following article on smoke cats in America is taken from *Field and Fancy* of October, 1902:—

"Smokes, with us, will probably rank with the silvers, and are destined to always hold a measure of popularity, though we have not such a very strong lot; in fact, we may say

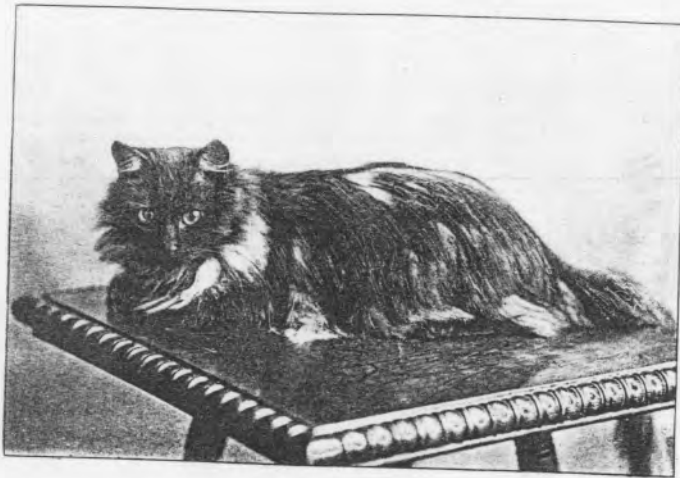
that good smokes are never so numerous anywhere as to become a nuisance, and we may fairly congratulate ourselves at this stage of the game upon what we have had and bred.

"Opinions differ as to what is a smoke, and at times we have to be rather lenient in the judging of these cats, for they are apt to be off colour—too light or too streaky. No one has yet, in America, taken up the colour solely to breed smokes and nothing else, which seems a pity, for they can be bred and kept with blacks, and each sets off the other, and when visitors come to the cattery the contrast is made more apparent.

"Those not conversant with the colour are apt to think anything smoky is a smoke exhibition cat, and no doubt, when good, those cats with dark faces and paws and light

bodies are very handsome, but more often than not they are streaky and are smoke tabbies. After mature consideration and after seeing a good many, we, as well as other breeders, still think that unless the 'South-down' cats, as some have called them, are very good we had better stick to the old definition of a smoke, and demand them dark enough.

"A really dark, rich smoke without marks is, without doubt, one of the richest in colouring of all our long-hairs, and the stars are few. One may go away from the original definition of a smoke, but when brought face to face with a good one it forces one to confess that this is the genuine article, and, when in grand condition, a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."



"LUCY CLAIRE."

OWNED BY MRS. CLINTON LOCKE.



BLUE AND CREAM PERSIANS.

(From a Painting by W. Luker, Jun.)



SMOKE AND ORANGE PERSIANS.

(From a Painting by W. Luker, Jun.)