

CHAPTER XXII.

MANX CATS.

THESE quaint cats are rapidly and surely coming into notice in the fancy. As a breed they are intelligent and affectionate, and, I believe, splendid sporting cats. They are undoubtedly great favourites amongst the sterner sex, perhaps because they are such keen and plucky ratters. As a breeder of Persian cats, and having become used to the beautiful wide-spreading tails of these cats, I confess there is something grotesque and unfinished, to my eyes, in the Manx, and from choice I should not care to keep these tailless pussies as pets. They do not appeal to me and to my sense of the beautiful. Having, therefore, never kept or bred Manx cats, I feel diffident in writing about them; but I have carefully studied those exhibited, and have also had opportunities of judging of their points whilst visiting friends who have fallen victims to the fascinations of these curious felines. I know a good Manx when I see one,

and to prove this assertion I will tell an incident in connection with a prize-winning Manx of to-day. A friend of mine living in London took compassion on a little stray black kitten who came crying for food. She fed him, and repeatedly tried to find poor pussy's owner, but in vain. I was appealed to to know what had better be done, and when I saw the little black fellow I strongly recommended my friend to keep it and exhibit it at the next large show, as I considered he would go in and win easily. She followed my advice in the latter respect, but placed too low a figure on "Nig," as she declared she did not wish to go in for Manx. I warned her he would be sold, and sure enough that clever and astute judge of cats of uncommon breeds, Mrs. H. C. Brooke, snapped him up at catalogue price; and since then he has blossomed forth into a champion, and as "King Clinkie" has taken highest honours whenever shown. It is only just to state that Mrs. Brooke most generously handed over some of her winnings to "King Clinkie's" former owner.

I will therefore proceed to give my opinion of Manx cats, but with all due deference to my fellow fanciers who have had personal experience with the breed. I think I have judged every species of cat, long- and short-haired, except Manx; but if I were given a class of this breed upon which to adjudicate, I should first closely examine their tails, or, to be more correct, the place where the tails ought *not* to be! I remember in former times stump-tailed cats, called Manx, used to win comfortably at shows, but in our up-to-date times I should make a black mark in my judging book against those cats with a stump or an appendage, or even a mere excrescence. I do not fear contradiction when I state that



TYPE OF MANX KITTEN.

(Photo: Russell & Sons, Windsor.)

a Manx cat of the true type should have no particle of tail—only a tuft of hair, which ought to be boneless.

The next point for which I should search would be the length of hind quarters, which lends such great individuality to this breed of cat. No doubt the lack of tail in itself makes a cat's hind legs look long, but we want more than that; we need a very short back, so that from the point of the quarters to the hocks there is a continuous and decided outward slope. In fact, the hind legs stand right back from the body, like a well-trained hackney's in the show ring. Coat I should next consider, as this differs, or should differ, considerably from both the long- and short-haired breeds. It should bear more resemblance to the fur of a rabbit, being longer and softer than that of our common or garden cats. I think a good-shaped round head as desirable in a Manx as in other breeds. As regards colour, the most common would seem to be tabbies, either silver, brown, or orange, and often there is a mixture of white. Self-coloured Manx seem to be much rarer, and Harrison Weir tells us he does not recollect having seen a white Manx.

As regards the colour of eyes in Manx cats, it is the custom to say that they do not matter in this breed; but, nevertheless, a cat that has the correct colour of eye must necessarily beat an animal that has just the opposite to what is set forth in the standard for short-haired English cats.

A lady friend of mine, who was brought up in the Isle of Man, has told me that she always understood that Manx cats came from a cross with a rabbit, but if this supposition is correct it seems too strange to be true that cats and rabbits should only form matrimonial alliances in the little island off our coast! It would appear more probable, therefore, that a foreign breed of cat was brought to the island, and the following article from the pen of Mr. Gambier Bolton gives his ideas on the subject:—

"In the Isle of Man to-day we find a rock named the Spanish Rock, which stands close into the shore, and tradition states that here



"GOLFSTICKS."

OWNED BY MISS SAMUELS.

(Photo: Albert Hester, Clapton, N.E.)

one of the vessels of the Spanish Armada went down in the memorable year 1558, and that among the rescued were some tailless cats which had been procured during one of the vessel's voyages to the Far East. The cats first swam to the rock, and then made their way to the shore at low tide; and from these have sprung all the so-called Manx cats which are now to be found in many parts of Great Britain, Europe, and America.

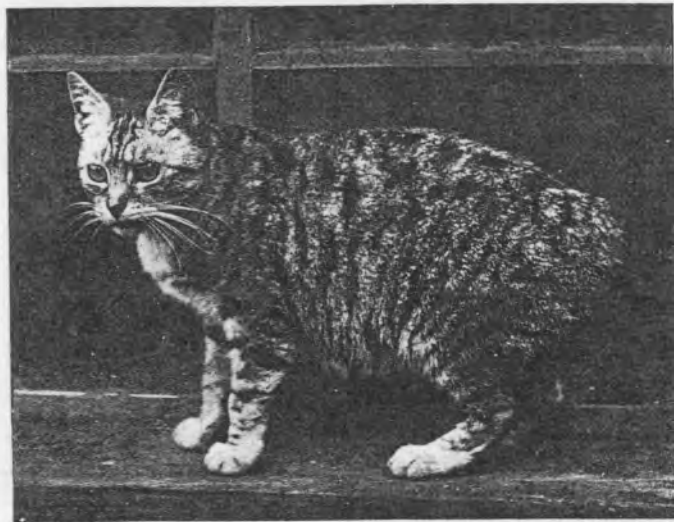
"The tale seems a bit 'tall,' and yet the writer feels so satisfied of its truth that he would welcome any change in the name of this peculiar variety of the domestic cat to sweep away the idea that they sprang from the Isle of Man originally.

"Any traveller in the Far East—Japan, China, Siam, and the Malay region—who is a lover of animals must have noticed how rarely one meets with a really long-tailed cat in these regions, for instead one meets with the kink-tailed (*i.e.* those with a bend or screw at the tip of the tail), the short kink-tailed (*i.e.* those with a screw tail like the bull-dogs), the forked-tailed (*i.e.* those having tails which start quite straight, but near the tip branch out into two forks), and finally the tailless (or miscalled Manx) cats; and the naturalist Kæmpfer states

definitely that the specimens of this breed now so common in parts of Russia all came originally from Japan. Again, anyone who breeds these tailless cats, and keeps the breed quite pure, must have noticed how they differ in appearance and habits from the common short-haired cats. They are, and should be, much smaller in size; the coat should be longer and more 'rabbity'; the 'call' is much nearer that of the jungle cat of the East than

"Kink-tailed, screw-tailed, fork-tailed, and absolutely tailless cats have all been exhibited at British shows of recent years, and the writer, from a personal knowledge of nearly all breeds, has no hesitation in recommending the latter as companions, their quaint and doglike ways making them general favourites whenever they are met with.

"There are at present six distinct types of Manx, or 'rumpy,' cats being exhibited at our



SPECIMEN OF A MANX TABBY.

(Photo: C. Reid, Wislaw.)

that of the ordinary cat; and their habits, like those of the Siamese cats, are much more doglike. In all these points they keep closely to what the writer firmly believes to be their original type, the domesticated cats of the Far East.

"The photographs illustrating this article give some idea of the general appearance of these delightfully quaint little creatures, and one notices immediately the great point that all judges look for, viz., the high hind quarters, which is so typical of the tailless breed of cats, the few hairs, which represent the spot where the tail should be, constantly appearing even a few hours after birth, although there is not a sign of a caudal appendage beneath them.

shows, viz.: The long straight-backed cat, the long roach-backed cat, the long straight-backed cat with high hind quarters, the short straight-backed cat, the short roach-backed cat, the short-backed cat with high hind quarters. The last type is the correct one, the first is the worst and commonest type, the others are intermediate and should be judged accordingly.

"Manx cats should always be judged in a good, large, empty pen, and never in their own pens, or when held by the judge.

"Coat.—Exactly the opposite to the ordinary domesticated short-haired cat. A long and open outer coat and a soft, close under coat is the correct thing."

At one time, we may presume, the Manx cat was kept pure in the Isle of Man; but, alas! the natives, with an eye to the main chance, have been led into manufacturing a spurious article, and many more tailless cats and kittens than ever were born have been sold to tourists eager to carry home some souvenir of the island to their friends on the mainland. I have been told that the landing pier is a frequent resort of dealers in so-called Manx cats, where the unwary traveller is way-laid and sold! On some out-of-the-way farms on the island I believe none but tailless cats have been kept for generations, and some genuine specimens may thus be picked up, if the tourist gives himself the trouble to go off the beaten tracks.

The following letters which appeared in *Our Cats*, in the issue of June 30th, 1900, will be read with interest. They were written by two gentlemen of prominent position in the Isle of Man, but as they did not wish to be identified as authorities on cats their names were not given:—

[LETTER I.]

Castletown, Isle of Man,

12th July, 1898.

I received yesterday your letter respecting Manx cats. I fear I am unable to aid you much in your inquiries as to the Manx cat, for any personal information I can give.

When I was a boy there was a kind of tradition that the tailless cat was brought here by the Spanish Armada. We have a headland called "Spanish Head," where it has been believed that some tailless cats escaped and took refuge here, and that from such cats all the so-called Manx cats have been derived. During my life I have frequently met persons who have travelled in Spain, and I think I have always asked from such persons if they had ever met with tailless cats there, but I never met anyone who had seen them. I never heard any other (traditional) origin of the Manx cat alleged. They are very common here, but not so common as cats with tails. Both cats with and cats without tails associate together. In my own house we have always kept cats, and in almost every litter of kittens there are some with and some without tails. I have two tailless cats now—one is a kitten of a few weeks old. It has no sign of a tail, but is (as designated here) a pure rumpy. The mother is one also, but she has a little fur tuft. I have frequently seen kittens

having a very small "rudimentary tail," such as one or two bones.

I have seen, I think, Manx cats of most of the colours mentioned by you, but the most common are the grey or tabby.

I have never heard of wild cats found here, and I do not think there is any tradition about them.

A few years ago I had a very fine tom cat (bred in my own house), black all over, and with no sign of a tail. I lost it. I presume it was stolen by some tripper. Trippers are frequently on the look-out for Manx cats, and I fear that many tailed kittens are deprived of their tails to meet the demand.

[LETTER II.]

Ramsey,

17th July, 1898.

Thank you for letting me see the interesting letters about Manx cats. I suppose the Society wants to have a standard by which to judge them. . . . I am sure we should all be interested to hear what they have to say on the subject, and we may be able to add some general information.

To take the questions in order I should say that grey tabby (barred, not spotted) is the most natural and correct, if one may so speak. I think it is certainly most common. I have known tortoiseshell, black-and-white, black, white, and perhaps others, which I now forget. The eye, so far as I know, is the same as in the common English tabby.

Certainly we have cats with tails—the rumpy being the rare form. Perhaps one in a litter, and one or two of them with half-tails.

As to what they are supposed to be, I have of course heard the Spanish Armada story. My own belief is that they have originated in a sport, e.g. as we find in dogs and fowls, and have been perpetuated as curiosities, and in modern times on account of their commercial value.

I do not know that there is any type which can be said to be more true than another with regard to size and shape of head, etc. The height at the hind legs is perhaps more apparent than real, caused by the abrupt ending, without the falling tail as in ordinary cats.

Professor Owen made a preparation, which may be seen at the British Museum, showing the bones (if any) of the tail. I think in a perfect specimen there should be no bones. Of course, there are all degrees of stumps.

It is only of recent years that any English fanciers have tried to breed true Manx cats. Miss Samuel has been very successful in establishing a strain which again and again breeds true to type. The "Golf-

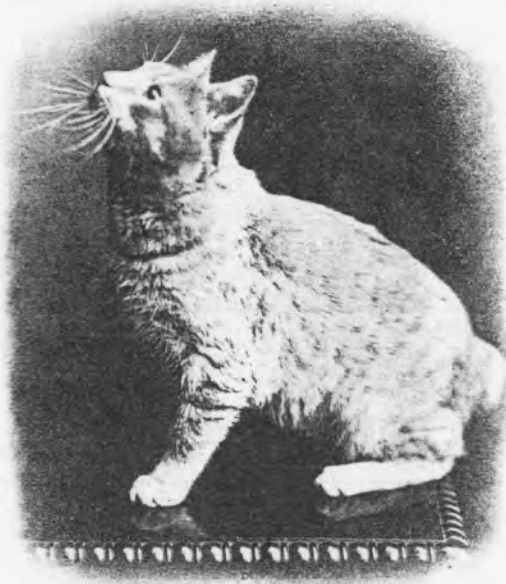
sticks" and "Kangaroo," two noted winners, are owned by her. In former days Miss Bugden's "Gorrie," Mr. Woodiwiss's "Manx King," "Pickles," "Belle," and "Beauty," all good cats, accounted for most of the prizes. Miss Jay, whose name is more familiarly known in connection with blue Persians, has always been partial to Manx cats, and used to exhibit at the Crystal Palace. The last time I visited the Holmwood cattery I was much struck with the number of tortoiseshell Manx cats running about the stable yard. Miss Jay has quite a family of these; but, needless to say, they are all of the female sex! Mrs. Herring has not been unmindful of this breed, and has exhibited some good specimens. Miss Dresser has owned Manx cats for many years and shown some good ones. Her "Belle Mahone" and "Moonlight" were nice tabbies, free from tail, and "Bonhaki Junior" was a very fine-shaped silver tabby-and-white; but, unfortunately, he had a stump which always kept him back. Mrs. Mosely has exhibited some good blacks. Lady Alexander owned several prize-winning Manx, but these have passed into the hands of Miss Hester Cochran. The best of these are "Ballochmyle Bell Stump,"

a curiously spotted tabby, absolutely tailless. "Bell Spitz" and "Strathcona" are also good specimens in Miss Cochran's possession. Mr. Gambier Bolton owned and bred some fine cats. "Manx Primrose," a black, and

"D-Tail," a silver tabby, won respectively first and second at the Westminster show in 1902. It is so usual to see "Breeder and pedigree unknown" after almost all the entries in the Manx classes that these two cats were distinguished by having a certified pedigree. It was a grievous loss when "D-Tail" disappeared very mysteriously from his home in St. John's Wood. "Manx Silverwing" passed from Mr. Bolton's possession to that of Mr. Foulstone's, and was later purchased by Mr. A. Ward, the well-known cat specialist. As will be seen from the illustration on page 251, this puss is almost a spotted tabby.

Lady Marcus Beresford has lately shown a great partiality for Manx. I think I am right in stating that the first one that inhabited the Bishopsgate cattery was a beautiful white called "Mona," that I procured for her. This fine specimen was brought from the island direct, and proved herself a splendid ratter; but, alas! she did not live long to enjoy the luxuries of her new home. There are, however, no fewer than five Manx now at Bishopsgate—

- "Jack," a silver tabby;
- "Patch," a tortoiseshell;
- "Satanella," a black female; and
- "Stumps," a brown



ORANGE MANX.
OWNED BY MRS. CLINTON LOCKE.
(Photo: S. S. Finley, Chicago.)

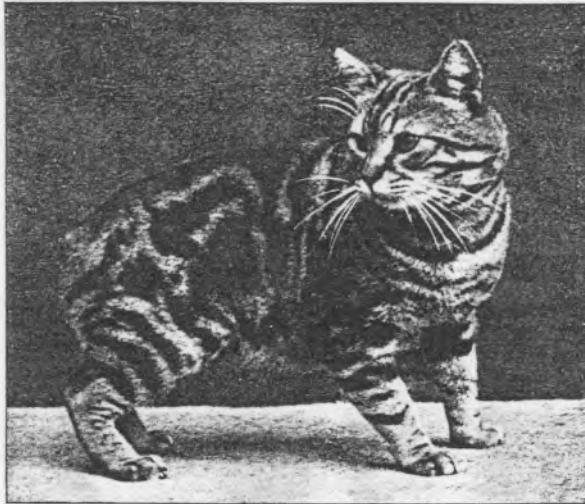
tabby male. The most recent addition is "King Clinkie," whom I have before mentioned as being owned by Mrs. H. C. Brooke. Does he ever think of his former struggling existence, now that his ways are those of

pleasantness and peace? One of the latest of the specialist clubs is the Manx Club, formed by Miss Hester Cochran in 1901, with an annual subscription of 10s.; this has been reduced to 5s., and the members in the beginning of 1903 numbered about twenty. The club has, as far as possible, devoted its limited funds to guaranteeing a

THE PROGENY OF A TAILLESS CAT OF THE ISLE OF MAN.

A cat brought from the Isle of Man (*felis catus anura*) to S. Germain en Laye, of which the pedigree is unknown, was mated with ordinary long-tailed cats, and among twenty-four kittens the four following different kinds appeared:—

- I.—Kittens with ordinary long tails.
- II.—Kittens with short and stump tails.
- III.—Kittens without tails, like the mother.
- IV.—Kittens without the least sign of a tail.



MRS. H. C. BROOKE'S MANX, "KATZENJAMMER."

(Photo: A. R. Pickett, Bexley Heath.)

better classification for Manx cats at the principal shows, and when unable to afford a guarantee has given special prizes for competition. The efforts of this small body of fanciers have been substantially rewarded by the great improvement in the quantity and quality of the Manx cats exhibited during the last eighteen months. Miss H. Cochran, who has given up all other cats for Manx, is the hon. secretary, and Lady Alexander hon. treasurer. Committee: Lady Alexander, Miss H. Cochran, Mrs. Herring, and Miss White Atkins. No doubt in time the officials and members of the Manx Club will be able to add to their number.

The following is translated from a paragraph in a German weekly paper called *Mutter Erde*, and appeared in *Our Cats* of March 1st, 1900:—

The comparison between the influence of the sire and that of the dam on the young is interesting:—

1 litter.	1 kitten like the mother.
2 "	6 kittens, 3 like the mother, 1 like the father.
3 "	5 " 3 " " 2 " "
4 "	3 " 1 " " 2 " "
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It will be seen that the influence of the mother predominates.

Manx cats may be considered shy breeders, and constantly the litter will consist of one kitten only! I have been told that they are excellent mothers; but, in the words of a Manx fancier, "they only care to have one family a year, many queens won't breed at all, and heaps of males are very funny and take no notice of their wives!" Another breeder of Manx informs me that these cats seem entirely fearless with dogs, and that her

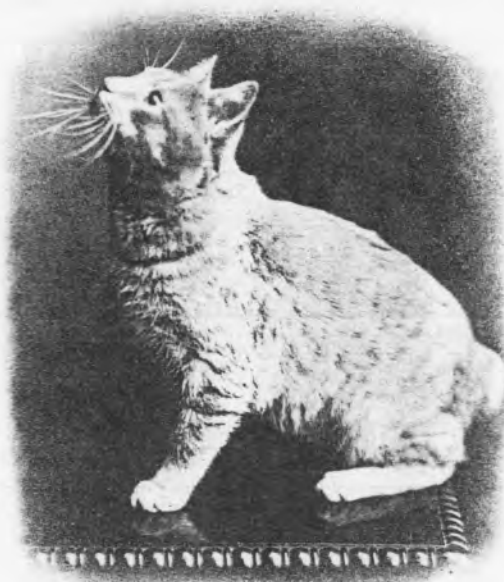
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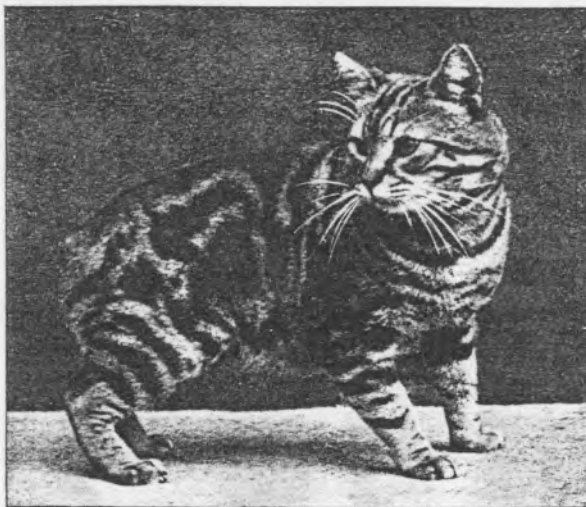
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canines and felines live together in perfect amity. I believe Mr. H. C. Brooke once exhibited a Manx in the same pen as a bull-dog at the South London Bull-dog Show of 1893. And now, having mentioned Mr. Brooke's name, I am pleased to say that this well-



"BALLOCHMYLE BELL SPITZ."
OWNED BY MISS HESTER COCHRAN.

known and successful fancier of Manx, as well as foreign, cats has kindly written an article on this variety, which is his pet speciality:—

"On this breed I think I may claim to write with some authority, as I have kept it for a number of years, and it has always been my favourite breed of cat. I believe I may, without boasting, say that I have of late years been of some service to the breed, by constantly agitating for the Manx classes to be entrusted to judges who take some interest in the variety; for it is a lamentable fact that there are numbers of people, good judges of the more popular breeds, who are quite willing to adjudicate upon the Manx classes without possessing the slightest qualifications, and these usually merely judge the Manx as a tailless cat, which is all wrong. During the last few years I am glad to say that the National Cat Club, at almost all its shows, instead of tacking the Manx classes on to the list of any all-round judge, has appointed capable judges; and whilst, of course, no judge has ever succeeded in pleasing all concerned (except when there

was only one entry in the class), the awards at these shows have always been reasonable and sound, and free from the absurdities which too often sicken fanciers and render the judge ridiculous at other shows. When we find an all-round judge openly stating that a Manx is but a tailless cat, and that he could manufacture perfect specimens, it is high time that that judge's name, however excellent a judge he may be of other breeds, should be inscribed upon the tablets of every Manx fancier's memory, and when he again officiates he should be saved the trouble of going over cats which he neither likes nor understands.

"What is a Manx but a tailless cat?' some may ask. Well, a cat with, perhaps, an inch of tail, though in my opinion unfit to win a prize, may possibly be really a better Manx, more calculated to do good to the breed, than an absolutely tailless cat. It may possess more Manx character, and this Manx character is a thing not 'understood of the people'; and here it is that those judges score who have taken a real interest in and studied the breed. A cat may have a couple of joints of tail, crooked or straight, and yet be a pure Manx; though, as we strive for perfection, I consider that such cats should be relegated to the stud, or at most only be placed in the money if the competition be very weak, and then never awarded any high prize.

"If breeders of Manx were more careful, there should be no difficulty in obtaining litters without any tail whatever. No cat can be a really typical Manx who is long-cast in the body. A short, cobby body is an essential in a show Manx. So also is a round, short skull. These points are usually noticeable when the kittens are young; as they grow older they disappear, frequently to return when the cat has outgrown its kittenhood. But the most important Manx property is the great length of hind leg, which absolutely marks the typical Manx as a cat quite distinct from a tailless cat; with this should be coupled a round, guinea-pig-like rump, round as an orange, which, of course, can only be obtained when there is absolutely no tail. Even a tuft

of gristle or hair, as found in many of the best specimens, though in itself but a very trifling defect, detracts from this typical 'rumpy' appearance, by giving a more or less angular appearance to the hind quarters, unless, that is, it be situated so far back between the hip-bones that it in no way projects. As typical specimens showing this rumpy formation to perfection, I may mention the late 'Champion and Premier Katzenjammer,' and 'Ballochmyle Bell Stump,' probably two of the best ever seen in this respect. Had these two been mated, what glorious progeny should have resulted. Now these two cats, whilst possessing the round rumpy formation to perfection, did not excel so much in length of hind leg, and for superlative excellence in this property we must turn to another celebrated couple, the late silver tabby 'Champion and Premier Bonhaki' and 'King Clinkie,' who has just passed into the possession of Lady Marcus Beresford, and who at the age of about fifteen months has already twice won championship awards. Now, these two cats exhibited the great length of hind leg which gave them, when in motion the desired comical rabbit action; but in roundness of rump they lost to the other two, being somewhat more angular.

"To gain absolute perfection we require *roundness of rump* united to *great length of hind leg*. These are the great characteristics of the Manx, to which every Manx judge worthy of the name will attach the greatest importance. Then come other body properties—shortness of back, general cobbinness, roundness of skull, small ears, shortness of face; then, last of all, colour. And here it is that the average all-round judge goes astray, for in too many cases he attaches too much weight to colour, a good instance of which occurred when 'Ballochmyle Bell Stump,' above referred to, whose colour, though quaint, is not very pleasing, was placed below a long-cast cat of a taking colour, but in no wise a typical Manx.

"As I before remarked, colour should be

considered last. I think a good black is the nicest colour for a Manx, and, of course, the eyes should be of the colour sought for in ordinary black cats. A pure blue-eyed white is very pretty, and also very scarce. Tabby-and-white I personally do not care for. Silver tabbies are uncommon and very handsome. Tortoiseshells are also pretty and quaint.

"The fur of the Manx should be just a little longer and softer than that of the ordinary short-haired cat. Now and then we see long-haired Manx advertised, but these are, of course, mongrels or abortions, and by no means Manx cats.

"What is the origin of the Manx? That is a question which in all probability will never be answered. The theory that it originated from a cat (or cats) having lost its tail by accident I do not consider worth a moment's consideration. Such a cat might well have tailless progeny, but that would have nothing to do with the abnormal length of the hind legs, which in good specimens is patent to the most superficial observer, and which makes the gambols of a couple of Manx a comical



MANX CAT.

(Photo: Gambier Bolton, F.Z.S. (Regd.).)

sight calculated to excite laughter in the most mournfully disposed person.

"Quaint is the old versified explanation, which I remember hearing some years ago.

It ran, if I remember rightly, somewhat like this:—

Noah, sailing o'er the seas,
 Ran high and dry on Ararat.
 His dog then made a spring, and took
 The tail from off a pussy cat.
 Puss through the window quick did fly,
 And bravely through the waters swam,
 Nor ever stopped, till, high and dry,
 She landed on the Isle of Man.
 Thus tailless puss earned Mona's thanks,
 And ever after was called Manx.

“The most feasible explanation, in my opinion, though of course it can be but a theory, is that these cats were originally imported from the East. Asiatic cats of domestic varieties show remarkable variety in the shape of their tails, as witness the kinks often found in the tail of the Siamese cat, and the knot tails of other varieties. This subject will be referred to again in a subsequent paper.

“It is also noticeable that many Manx, like the Siamese, are very dog-like in their habits, showing extreme affection for their owners. Poor old ‘Katzenjammer,’ for instance, would follow me to the railway station, and many a time on my return from town have I found him sitting in the middle of a field waiting for me, and on seeing me he would accompany me home just like a dog.

“To return to the question of the Manx cat's tail, this should, of course, be like snakes in Iceland—absent. What we want is for the spinal column to come to an end high up on the back, so that on placing the finger where the tail would begin a hollow or depression is felt. This is the perfection, but it is not always obtainable in even the very best specimens. Next to be desired is when only a little tuft of gristle and hair, with at most a suggestion of a twisted and withered bone, is present. Then comes a distinct caudal vertebra, if twisted or abnormal in shape so much the better; but in my opinion more than two joints should not be allowed in show specimens at all, though such cats, as I remarked above, may be valuable at stud for breeding from. But I see no reason, if Manx breeders would pay more attention, and incompetent judges were barred,

why absolute taillessness should not be attained in ninety-nine kittens out of each hundred. I have bred many, but none have had the crooked stumps we often see in otherwise good specimens.

“I do not care for large Manx, which generally look coarse. Here, again, the all-rounder often goes astray, and unduly favours a large cat.

“I can heartily recommend the Manx as a pet, and the quaintness of his movements are certainly a recommendation. My cats are all house pets, so that I can watch them and enjoy their company; the ‘cattery’ cat is abhorrent to me. I cannot understand why so few people go in for rationally breeding this quaint variety. I had hoped that the recent purchase by his Majesty of two couples of the breed might have given it a fillip.

“To illustrate the breed, I may perhaps be accused of egotism in giving the portrait of one of our own cats, but as he is dead it is less invidious than if living specimens were selected, and as they were awarded the very highest prizes by the very greatest authorities they may safely be taken as near perfection. The silver tabby ‘Champion and Premier Bonhaki’ was bred by Mr. Jungbluth, one of the keepers of the monkey house at the Zoo. He made his *debut* at the Botanic Gardens as a kitten, when he was much admired by the then Princess of Wales, and Mr. Wain awarded him the championship. This success he followed up by winning four others under various judges, and died at the early age of twenty-seven months. ‘Champion and Premier Katzenjammer’ was bred at home; he did not commence his show career till late, and then he had to meet ‘Bonhaki,’ after whose death, however, he was unbeaten, and had earned his champion title at the time of his death from gastritis last year, which robbed me of one of the most affectionate ‘pals’ man ever had, and I am not ashamed to own that many and bitter were the tears I shed over his grave.

“In conclusion, I would advise Manx fanciers to do their best to accustom their cats to seeing strangers, to being handled, and to

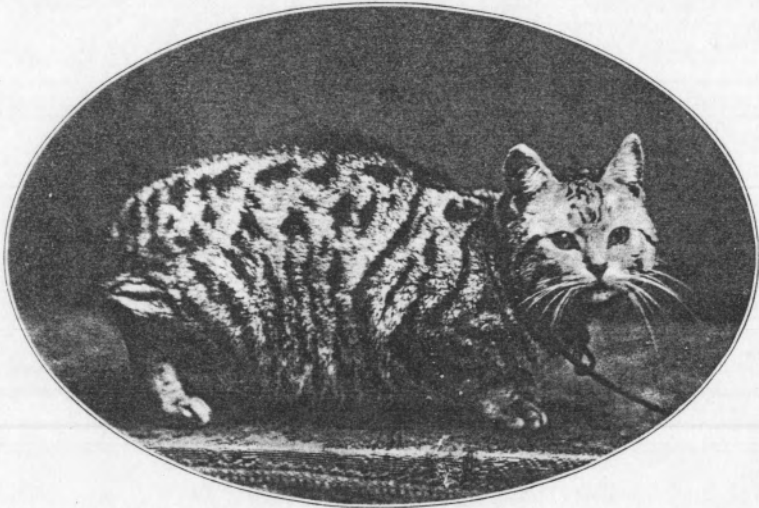


BLACK MANX AND ROYAL SIAMESE CATS.

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

the show pen ; for when a cat is nervous and crouches in a heap it is most difficult to see whether the desired shape of hind quarters and rabbit action are present. They can best be seen when the cat holds itself fearlessly and

boldly ; and when a judge has a large number of classes to get through in a short space of time, in very likely an ill-lighted building, he cannot spend half an hour coaxing each cat to show its action."



MR. WARD'S MANX "SILVERWING."

(Photo: H. Glacier, Longsight.)