



"ASHBRITTLE PETER."

THE PROPERTY OF MRS. E. A. CLARK.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHORT-HAIRED CATS.

IF a census could be taken of the cats in England, or even in London, I suppose the proportion of short-haired cats to long-haired cats would be about ten to one. In the cat fancy, however, the breeders of Persians in comparison with those of the short-haired varieties are far more numerous. In former days, when cat shows were first held at the Crystal Palace, the premier position was given to the short-haired breeds. On reference to the catalogues up to 1895 I find the following heading at the commencement: "Class I. Short-haired Cats: He Cats, Tortoiseshell or Tortoiseshell-and-White." Then followed the rest of the short-haired varieties, including Siamese, Manx, and blue (self colour).

The long-haired breeds, therefore, in those days had to play second fiddle, so to speak. It was in 1896, when the National Cat Club took over the Crystal Palace shows, that the

place of honour was given to the long-haired or Persian cats; and now, as all the world knows—or, at any rate, all the cat world—at every show the short-haired cats are in a very small minority.

At one time—not so very long ago—there was a danger of these breeds becoming an unknown quantity at our shows. This would have been a grievous pity; so some champions of the household or homely puss arose, and Sir Claud and Lady Alexander founded in 1901 the British Cat Club, to encourage the breeding, exhibiting, and kind treatment of these cats. The subscription first started at 5s., but was reduced to 2s. 6d., so as to try to get members of the poorer classes to join and take an interest in the welfare of pussy. A goodly number of members' names are now on the list, and much has been done in supporting shows by offering specials—chiefly in money—and in the



BLUE AND WHITE SHORT-HAIRED CATS.

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

generous guaranteeing of classes. The hon. secretary and treasurer is Sir Claud Alexander, Faygate Wood, Sussex. There is a Scottish branch of this club, of which the secretary is Miss Leith, Ross Priory, Alexandria, N.B.

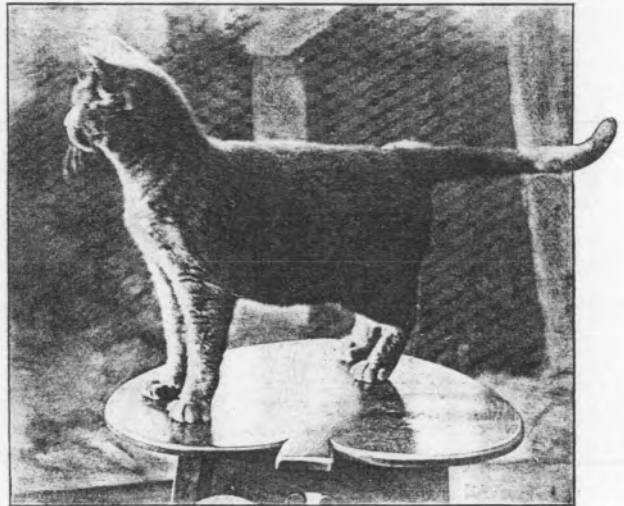
It was also in 1901 that the Short-haired Cat Society was founded by Mr. Gambier Bolton, whose name is so well known in the animal world. At most of the principal shows this society is represented, and some handsome challenge cups and prizes are placed for competition. The hon. secretary is Mrs. Middleton, 67, Cheyne Court, Chelsea, and the annual subscription is 5s., and 2s. 6d. to working classes.

In considering the short-haired breeds, I will divide them into three sections—viz. selfs or whole colours, broken colours, and any other distinct variety. The Siamese and Manx cats I have dealt with in previous chapters, and foreign cats will have a corner to themselves later on; so I propose to deal first with those interesting short-haired self-coloured cats formerly called Russian or Archangel, and which in America are termed Maltese.

There has been a good deal of discussion lately as to the points desirable in these cats, which of recent years have clearly become a species of British cats, and therefore are rightly classed as such at our shows, instead of as Russians. Yet this latter name sticks to the variety, and no doubt there are still some real foreign short-haired blues to be found, differing, however, in type from those we have become accustomed to breed and exhibit in England. Harrison Weir and John Jennings, in their book on cats in the early days of the fancy, deal with cats called Russians amongst the long-haired breeds, and these are described by them as larger in body and shorter in leg than Persians, with a coat of woolly texture interspersed with wiry, coarse hairs. In colour we are told they were generally dark tabby, the markings being rather indistinct.

I do not think such cats are to be found now in our midst, and so I presume this species of long-haired cat has died out. Anyhow, the term "Russian," when now used, is meant to designate the self-coloured, smooth-haired cat with which we are all familiar. Certainly, the best blues I have always remarked are those that have been bred in England, or that, at least, can boast an English sire or dam; and, after writing right and left to breeders of British cats, I have had a difficulty in obtaining any really good photographs. I cannot, however, complain of the pictures of blue short-hairs which illustrate these pages, and which have been really showered upon me. I have failed, however, to be able to illustrate the difference between the foreigners and Britishers.

That there are two distinct types of these blue cats is apparent to anyone who observes the specimens exhibited at our shows. The foreign or imported variety have wedge-shaped faces, and are longer and larger in the head, with prominent ears; otherwise, in colour and coat, they are similar to those bred in England, and which partake of the same formation as an ordinary British cat. In



"BALLOCHMYLE BLUE QUEEN."
BELONGING TO LADY ALEXANDER.

describing the correct texture of coat of these short-haired blues, I would compare it to plush, for the hair does not lie softly on the slope, but has a tendency to an upright growth, and yet the coat should not have any suspicion of coarseness or roughness to the touch. We know the difference between silk and cotton plush, and it is to the former I would liken the correct coat of these blues. Needless to say that, as in all



MRS. CAREW COX'S BLUE MALE
"BAYARD."

self-coloured cats, the colours should be absolutely even—of a bluish lilac tint, without any sootiness or rusty shade. As in other breeds of "selfs," the young kittens exhibit distinct tabby markings, but these vanish as the coat grows, and many a ringed tail which may have caused distress to the breeder will as time goes on be proudly held aloft without a suspicion of any blemish. The blues now exhibited appear generally to fail in eye, the colour being yellow, and often green or greenish-yellow; whereas a special feature of this breed should be a deep orange eye, round and full. Another fault which is sometimes apparent is too thick a tail, which is suggestive of a long-haired ancestor. The following is an interesting letter from Mrs. H. V. James which appeared in *Fur and Feather* :—

BLUE RUSSIANS.

I am very interested in the discussion on blue Russians, as years ago I had a perfect type of a blue Russian, which had been imported. When Russians were judged as Russians it won well at shows, so you may like to have a description of the cat—which is, I believe, a correct one, according to several authorities on Russian cats. A real Russian should be longer in the leg than the English blue. The head is pointed and narrow; the ears large, but round; tail long, full near the body, but very tapering. According to the English taste, it is not a pretty cat, and only excels over the British blue in the colour and quality of its coat, which is much shorter and softer than the latter. The true colour is a real lavender-blue, of such softness and brilliancy that it shines like silver in a strong light. The eyes are amber. I think it a great mistake to give "Russian" in our show classification now, as these are really almost extinct in England, I believe, and our principal clubs have been wise enough to drop the title for "Short-haired Blues," in the same way that "Persian" has been dropped for "Long-haired Cats." The last time I showed my Russian was at the first Westminster show, in a class for Russians. She was, however, beaten by the round-headed British blue, although she was, I believe, the only Russian in the class. In 1901 the class was altered to "Short-haired Blues," which was more correct, as few of the blues shown then had anything of the Russian about them, either in shape or coat. As these classes are now arranged, it would be unfair to judge them except by the standard of our own short-haired cats, and I think that if a club wants to encourage Russians it should give the extra class, "Blue Russian," and let it be judged as such. I must own it is disappointing for a Russian owner, who, seeing "Russian Blue" only given in the schedule, enters his cat accordingly, and gets beaten by a short-haired blue failing in just the points that the Russian is correct in. I know my feelings after Westminster, 1899, when my Russian was described as "grand colour, texture of coat, failing to winner in width of head and smallness of ears." The blue short-hairs now shown are, I know, far more beautiful with their round heads and shorter legs; but, unfortunately, the beautiful is not always the correct type. As British cats, however, they are both beautiful and correct, so why not drop the Russian name altogether? I had a most amusing talk with a blue Russian (?) owner the other day, and a good laugh with him over the ancestors of his "Russian" blues.

ANNIE P. JAMES.

At the Crystal Palace show of 1902 Mr. Woodiwiss judged the blue classes, and awarded first to a cat having the English type of head. He gave as his reasons that although he

considered the long nose and thin head the right shape for a Russian, yet, he added, "I am not here to judge on those lines; I have to judge according to the standard, which gives preference to round head, neat ears, and short nose; and, although I really believe Mrs. Walker's blue 'Moscow' to be the nearest in type to those I have seen in Eastern countries, yet according to our English breeders' standard it is out of it, and I can only give it reserve." Mr. Mason, our ablest judge of all classes of cats, upheld Mr. Woodiwiss in his awards, and makes the following remarks in *Fur and Feather* of February, 1903, in reporting on the Manchester show:—"I hope exhibitors and breeders of short-haired self-blues will take my remarks in the spirit in which they are written. I am glad to see that the Manchester committee named the classes 'Blues (Male)' and 'Blues (Female)'. To call them Russians is a mistake, seeing that a very large number of those exhibited are crosses from some other varieties. To all intents the self blues, as we find them to-day, have little of the Russian blood in them. Then why call them Russian? Why not "self blues," and judge them on the same lines as the British short-haired cats? What I want to obtain is a uniform type. To go



"SHERDLEY MICHAEL."

many in number, nor has there ever appeared any startlingly good specimens in the show pen. Mr. Woodiwiss kept and exhibited several fine specimens — "Blue Boy,"

"Blue King," and "Blue Queen." The two latter have been passed on to Lady Alexander. Mr. Mariner, of Bath, is an old exhibitor and great enthusiast of this breed. Mrs. Middleton,



"SHERDLEY ALEXIS."

Mrs. Herring, Mrs. Crowther, Miss Butler, Mrs. Illingworth, and Mrs. Pownall have all from time to time been possessed of fairly good Russians so called. Mr. Cole used to show a lovely fat-faced cat called "Muff," but she had green eyes. Mr. Dewar's "Firkins" and Mr. McNish's "St.



"SHERDLEY SACHA II." "SHERDLEY SACHA I."

Juan" are blues that have made their name.

The three principal breeders at the present time of these cats are Lady Alexander, Mrs. Michael Hughes, and Mrs. Carew Cox. It is at the Crystal Palace shows that an opportunity is given of admiring the fine team of blues from the Faygate cattery. "Brother Bump" has won a first prize whenever he has appeared in the show pen, and, curiously enough, each time under a different judge. He is a full champion, and special prizes have been showered upon him. Besides this handsome fellow, Lady Alexander owns another male—"Blue King"—and two good females.

At Sherdley Hall, in Lancashire, there is quite a colony of blues owned by Mrs. Michael Hughes.

Breeders of short-haired blues have never been

The cats are reared in outside and unwarmed houses, with ample wired-in runs. All the Sherdley cats are prize-winners. I am able to give illustrations of "Alexis Michael" and the two "Sachas." The first named has been quoted as a typical British blue.

Mrs. Carew Cox is a most ardent supporter and successful breeder of short-haired blues. As she has had a long and varied experience, I asked her to send me some notes. I have pleasure in publishing them for the benefit of my readers:—

"Blue short-haired cats—many of them imported from Northern Russia—make very desirable pets, presenting, as they do, a neat, smart, 'tailor-built' appearance all the year round, and possessing the great intelligence usually to be met with in all short-haired breeds. They have the advantage over many other varieties in that they are, as adults, strong, healthy cats—not at all liable, as a rule, to pulmonary attacks. Kittens, however, require both care and patience to rear successfully, and, strange to say, attain sounder constitutions when brought up by healthy English foster-mothers. Females are more difficult to rear than males. A Russian cat should be of

an even shade of blue throughout, even the skin itself being often—in fact, generally—of a bluish tinge. There should be no stripes or bars, and—for exhibition purposes—there should be no white patches. Kittens frequently have body markings when very young, also rings on their tails; but in pure-bred specimens these defects generally become

effaced before they are many weeks old. In one case a kitten (now a large neuter) had until five months of age two broad black stripes down his back on either side of his spine; they were so decided in appearance that it seemed very doubtful that they would ever disappear. However, at six months old he was a perfectly self-coloured cat! This is, of course, most remarkable and unusual, and amongst all the many kittens of this breed that I have reared for the past thirteen years there has never been another presenting a similar appearance.

"The eyes of a Russian should be golden in colour, or deep orange. To procure deep-coloured eyes, experiments have been made in crossing Russians with Persians, but the results—so far as I have seen—have not proved satisfactory, and to an experienced eye the cross is perceptible. I believe there is no really recognised

standard of points for this breed, which until quite recently was comparatively little known. I note that there is a very fair demand for Russians at the present time—chiefly, strange to say, from the North of England. The shape of the head in many of those imported is more pointed than round; indeed,

some have long, lean, pointed heads and faces, with big ears. The backs of the ears should be as free from hair as possible; some, I remark, are entirely devoid of hair on the upper parts of their ears—at least, if there is any, it is not perceptible to the naked eye. Others, again, have ears covered with peculiarly fine, close, silky hair. Some imported blues are



"MARIA."

OWNED BY MRS. WOODCOCK.

(Photo: S. Richardson, Standish.)

very round in face and head, with tiny ears, and eyes set rather wide apart. These are surely the prettiest, and are generally given the preference at shows; but, of course, it cannot be denied that the long-faced variety present the most foreign appearance, more especially when this type also possesses a lithe and rather lean body. The whiskers, eye-lashes, and tip of nose should all be dark blue.

"The coat should be short and close, glossy, and silvery; sometimes it is rather woolly and furry, Nature having evidently provided these cats with their warm, close coats to enable them to resist the severities of their native climates, short-haired blues existing also in the north of Norway, Iceland, and—I am told—in some parts of the United States. Many years ago some blues (with faint tabby markings) were imported from the north of Norway; these were called 'Canon Girdlestone's breed.' I owned two very pretty soft-looking creatures. Blue-and-white cats have been imported from the north of Russia, and are particularly attractive when evenly marked.

"Some blues are far paler in colour than others. Amongst my kittens are frequently some very beautiful lavender-blues; I have remarked that these are rather more delicate in constitution than those of darker hue. As these cats advance in years they frequently become a rusty brown during the summer months, or when acquiring a fresh coat; this discoloration asserts itself principally at the joints of legs and feet. The fur of a very old cat becomes dull and rough, losing the soft and glossy appearance identical with the blue Russian in his prime.

"There are some people who appear to wish to assert that there is an English breed of blues, and I have been told strange tales of unexpected meetings in country villages with cats of this colour, whose owners declared that

both parents were English bred. As, however, it is not always possible to identify the sires of household cats, I venture to doubt these assertions. It is sometimes possible to breed blues from a black English female mated to a Russian male. This experiment does not always succeed, as some blacks never breed blues, although mated several times consecutively with Russians. A white English female mated to a blue male simply produces white kittens—at least, this has been my experience. Cats imported from Archangel are generally of a deep, firm blue throughout; the eyes and ears rather larger than those of English cats, the head and legs longer. In many of the Russian peasants' cabins can be seen a curious coloured print (executed in Moscow). It represents the burial of



MRS. CAREW COX'S "YULA."

the cat after a dramatic fashion, and derives its origin from a very interesting Russian legend. The cat is represented as slate-coloured.

"It is often impossible to decide the ultimate colour of a kitten's eyes until it is four months old. They vary very much, sometimes giving one the impression that they are green, and perhaps a few days afterwards one discovers them to be yellow! As these cats become better known they naturally increase in popularity, and I should not be surprised to hear of several well-established kennels of this breed in the immediate future.

"It is many years ago since I first made acquaintance with this breed; but I find I made no notes at the time, so cannot give full particulars. In 1889, however, I purchased a smooth blue, whose owner declared her to be a Siamese—she certainly resembled a puma-shaped Siamese in her body outline and movements—and I believe I entered her in the stud book as such. 'Dwina' won many prizes at Crystal Palace and other shows in 'any variety' classes, was a most faithful creature, reared many families, and lived until June,

1901. In 1890 I owned a very pretty soft-looking blue female—she was, in fact, a blue tabby (one of Canon Girdlestone's breed); also a male of the same variety: They had evidently been the victims of tape-worm for a considerable period, and finally succumbed owing to the presence of these odious parasites in overwhelming numbers. That same year 'Kola'—a very pretty blue-and-white female—became mine. She was imported from Kola, and after changing hands more than once whilst at sea she was finally exchanged at the London Docks for a leg of mutton! A very lovable little cat was 'Kola,' with very round face and very soft fur. She lived until November, 1900, and evidently died from old age, becoming feeble and toothless, but quite able to enjoy the soft food that was specially prepared for her. These two old pets—'Dwina' and 'Kola'—were a great loss, after twelve and ten years' companionship. 'Lingpopo'—an extremely beautiful blue—was imported from Archangel, very sound in colour, rather long in face and legs, sleek, sinuous, and graceful, peculiarly lethargic in her movements, and dainty in her deportment. I bought her in 1893, when she was seven months old. Unfortunately, a disease of the kidneys carried her off when in the flower of her existence. 'Moscow' (1893) was a very successful blue Russian sire of many kittens; he won many first and special prizes; he died in 1897, during my absence from home. In 1895 Lady Marcus Beresford presented me with a very handsome kitten—a male—with a very thick yet close coat, and very compact in shape. 'Olga' came to me in 1893 or 1894, and still

lives; she was imported, and has been a great winner in her time, but is getting an old cat now. She is the mother of my stud cat 'Bayard,' who was born in 1898, and whose sire was 'King Vladimir.' 'Fashoda' was born in 1896, and was imported; she is a large, strong cat, and a winner of many prizes. 'Odessa' is a daughter of 'Fashoda' by 'Blue Gown.' 'Yula' came to me in 1901, and was imported from Archangel. 'Sing Sing' (neuter) is the cat that as a kitten had the peculiar black stripes down his spine alluded to previously. He was born on Easter

Monday, 1899, a son of 'Fashoda' and 'Muchacho.' He has two toes off one of his hind feet—the result of a heavy weight falling upon his foot when a kitten; he suffered greatly from shock, and every day for three weeks he paid visits to the doctor, who dressed his foot, having previously amputated the toes. The little fellow had a sad time, but he does not miss his toes now.

“'Muchacho,' the stud cat that has sired

so many winning kittens, is a son of Mrs. Herring's (late) 'Champion Roguey' and my (late) 'Lingpopo.' I sold him as a kitten, but after two people had had him I again became his owner, and now he will never leave me until he is called to the 'happy hunting grounds' that I hope, and think, must be prepared for all faithful creatures somewhere 'beyond the veil.'”

In America the classification given for these cats at the Beresford Cat Club show is “Blue or Maltese,” but I have not heard of any ardent fanciers of this breed over the water. More will be written on the so-called Maltese cat by



LADY ALEXANDER OF BALLOCHMYLE.

(Photo: Lafayette, Ltd.)

one well qualified to give information later on in this work.

I have always been told what delightful pets these blues become, being extremely intelligent and affectionate. Mrs. Bagster, the Cat Club's hon. secretary, owns a splendid fellow—one of Mrs. Carew Cox's well-known strain. At the time of writing there is no specialist club for short-haired blues, but they are included in the list of the British Cat Club, founded by those ardent supporters of the short-haired breeds, Sir Claud and Lady Alexander. No standard of points has been drawn up for these cats, but the following definitions are descriptive of the two types exhibited at our shows :—

BRITISH BLUE (SHORT-HAIR).

Head.—Round and flat, with good space between the ears, which are small and well set on.

Shape.—Cobby in build, round quarters, and good in bone substance.

Coat.—Short and close, of sound blue colour throughout. Legs and feet shade lighter in colour, with no bars or markings.

Eyes.—Deep orange in colour.

RUSSIAN BLUE.

Head longer in formation, has space between the ears, more prominent in ears, and well-tapered face; fairly round under the cheek bone, thin, falls away under the eye.

Comes out rather longer in back. Less bone substance.

Colour same as the British short-hair, with no bars or markings.

Eyes deep orange colour.



"BALLOCHMYLE CHAMPION BROTHER BUMP."