

FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE FANCY

We hope to run articles of lasting interest which appeared in books and magazines of around a half a century back in time. These following are from the collection of Miss Dorothy Mason, who has been doing a lot of research for the Year Book. C. S.

ORANGE PERSIANS

By H. L. Vidal

from THE CAT REVIEW, June 25, 1904, pp. 9, 10, 11

"Those yellow cats" are becoming more and more popular every year now, and while quite admitting the claim to beauty of the silvers, etc., I believe that in a few years, when a really rich orange color has become more general orange cats will be taken up just as strongly as the more fashionable colors of the present day. Just now, it must be admitted, that they are subject to many faults. A few years ago the orange and cream classes were the "roost" of the longest noses to be found anywhere, but now all that has changed, and the cry of "color, color," has not been allowed to lead to a disregard for head properties to any great extent.

The only way to breed all orange kittens is from two orange parents, though those from a blue, tortoise-shell, or blue tortoise-shell queen and an orange sire, are almost invariably more rich and sound in color. Almost every orange of note that I can think of has had either sire or the dam a different color than orange, and several who stand well out from their brethren have had a blue sire and a tortoise dam. Thus it will be seen that it is advisable to combine an orange and a blue cattery, the kittens of both colors generally benefiting from the cross. The litters will necessarily be mixed, and some may be a disappointment to the orange breeder, but it is surely better to breed a few really rich orange than a host of pale-colored ones.

The sire generally seems to have more influence on the external characteristics of his progeny, and so it is well to have an orange sire, combined with a blue or tortoise-shell dam. An orange queen bred to a blue sire too often has no orange kittens, but a tortoise-shell mated in the same way will often produce one "record-beater," though by this cross the orange males are few and far between, the "gentlemen" being

mostly blacks, though orange females are quite numerous. A few years ago these were quite rare, which fact seemed to bear out Darwin's theory that the females corresponding to the orange males were tortoise-shell in color.

Especially on this side of the water, fanciers do not mind whether their oranges are "tabbies" or "solid," and some shows have set the ball rolling in the right direction by providing separate classes for the two colors, and there is no reason why the devotees of each variety should not be allowed to work each in his own direction. In the orange tabbies, as with the brown tabbies, we must put a premium on the contrast between the ground color and markings, and my idea of a good orange tabby would be much better described as a cream-tabby. If the body color is a really rich orange, the contrast with the markings would be utterly lost. The blue cat has been quite rightly voted too dark to be bred with tabby markings with advantage, and the lighter color, silver, has been used instead with great effect. Why not the same with the oranges and creams? The contrast, which is the chief beauty of all the tabbied breeds, would be far greater and more effective between creams and cream tabbies than between oranges. Personally, I am far more in favor of "solid" oranges, but I am not so biased as to ignore the claims of the admirers of the orange tabby.

The worst point other than color that orange cats can suffer from is a white chin and lips, and once it has found its way into your strain, it will take years of persistent effort for it to be outbred. It is almost always to be traced back to some white or brown baby ancestor, and really successful orange breeders will have absolutely nothing to do with a cat disfigured in this way, and in England, in the show pen, it is practically a disqualification. Such cats are rigidly tabooed, even for breeding purposes.

Dame Nature is not in the habit of wasting the coloring matter at her disposal by placing it where it will not be directly seen, as on the underjaw of a cat. The inside web of a feather of the most brightly colored bird, which is hidden by the outside web of its neighbor, is always a dull, dingy color, and only the part that is directly in view when the feathers are tight against the body is richly painted. We want to try and assist Nature to overcome these scruples, and be a little more liberal with the many colors on her palette. The richer and more even the body color, the more likely is the sound color to creep up round the chin and lips; and if we can get them cream instead of white, it is the first step in the right direction.

It is almost as hard to assist Nature to better her own ideas of coloring as it is to attempt something absolutely opposed to her ideas, as we are doing in the case of tortoise-shells. It is easy to breed moderately good orange cats, but very hard to breed them to anything near perfection. However, their popularity is now assured, and I hope to see a great improvement in the next few years in this, my favorite variety. As "Our Cats" puts it, "Color, color, is the orange breeder's cry." We want to remove as far as possible any chance of their being called "yellow" or "sandy" cats, hence the "color" cry, but don't let us forget their heads.

ORANGE PERSIANS

By Mrs. Champion

from THE CAT REVIEW, June 25, 1904, pp 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

The orange Persian, unlike the cream, has for a long time been recognized as a distinct variety, separate classes having been provided for them at all the leading English shows even as far back as Holland Park, June, 1896, where eleven of this variety were benched, the chief exhibitor in this color at the time being Lady Marcus Beresford, who entered six for the team prize, one entry being the beautiful "Lifeguard," probably the handsomest orange ever exhibited. He was bred by Mrs. Spachman, who with Mrs. Yeoman, was perhaps one of the most successful breeders of oranges at that date.



Lifeguard, orange male*

The greatest fault among orange Persians is want of bone in head formation, and in this point "Lifeguard" excelled, perhaps more so than in his color, which might have been deeper.

He was not shown much, but was always in the prizes on his rare appearances in public. Like many other noted cats, he appeared to have left no celebrated descendants to carry on his fame, although he was

still in Lady Marcus Beresford's possession in 1899. It would have been interesting to breeders to know how this cat, of such unusual type for an orange, was bred, but unfortunately there is no record as to the color of either of his parents or grandparents in any of the old stud books.

There are two varieties of the orange Persian, namely, "the tabby" and the "unmarked" or "self" orange. The handsomer of these is certainly the unmarked specimen, as it is possible, though not at all easy, to obtain them, perfectly unmarked and of a deep ruddy orange, whereas, as is the case with many long-haired cats, the tabby usually fails badly both in depth and distinctness of markings. To fully appreciate this failing, one has only to compare them to the short-haired orange tabbies, especially to those bred by Mr. Kuhnle, of Bradford, England, than which more beautiful cats cannot be imagined; they are large and well built, of a lovely deep orange ground color, with broad dark markings, which are so rich as to look almost crimson. If the long-haired tabbies even approached these in color, they would, we should say, be about the showiest of all varieties. Unfortunately, they are only too much inclined to be pale in color, so much so that they were at one time not at all popular in England, except of course among fanciers of the color, being generally spoken of by the general public as "those sandy cats." We believe that there are now in America more orange cats than there are in England, especially females. It is a cur-

ious fact that in this color, as well as in the creams, a female kitten has always been regarded as quite a rarity among breeders of the color in England. Over here they do not seem nearly so scarce, and in consequence breeders here should have a great advantage as they can always, or nearly always, breed from a queen of the same color as the male, whereas, until quite recently, English breeders were in the habit of crossing tortoise-shell and orange, or even black and orange, in their breeding operations.

Orange cats, even under favorable conditions, by which I mean starting with both parents of the same color, are not at all easy to obtain in perfection. Although the novice, on breeding a litter of kittens from two such cats, may be delighted with what may appear to be a whole family of future champions, he or she is likely to suffer great disillusionment on showing them to a good judge, say at six weeks, or on exhibiting them for the first time at a show where there is plenty of competition.

The apparently perfect specimen is perhaps relegated to the V.H.C. brigade, or lower, and when the disappointed owner inquires the reason, he or she is told that the cat in question has probably at least three bad faults not noticeable to a novice. For instance, the eyes are a shade too pale, the coat, although appearing a lovely orange, shades white at the roots, and last of all, though by no means least, the cat has that all too common fault, a white chin.

The three great desideratums to breed for are head, eyes, and color. By the latter we mean soundness even more than depth, as a shaded orange is quite as faulty as a shaded blue or an unsound black. Taking head as the first importance, this should be short, round under the eyes and as large as possible for the size of the cat. A cat who especially excelled in this point among the "old timers" was Miss Beal's famous female, "Jeal," who recently died at the advanced age of thirteen, we believe, and whose last appearance was at Sandy, 1901, where she again took first. This cat's most notable descendant, and the best headed orange now shown, we would say, is Miss Beal's "Romaldkirk Minotaur." "Minotaur's" shape, head and eyes are beautiful; in fact, if it were not for his color and a slight want for size, he would be perfect; he is just too much marked for a self orange and not marked enough for a tabby.

To take the next point, namely, eyes — these should be large, round, and of as deep a color as possible: "copper brown" is the most desired, but orange or even amber, is allowable, green eyes being a tabooed color in this variety. The color of the coat is a very important point, and the deeper, richer orange it is, the more valuable is your cat.

The unmarked variety should, of course, be free from all signs of "tabby," even on the face and legs, where this fault is most liable to appear. The sounder the color, the better the cat, a white undercoat are being allowable, although, of course, in the tabbies the markings are more or less on the surface of the coat, the under coat being a good deal paler.

It is almost as difficult and quite as important to get a tawny chin on an orange cat as it is on a brown tabby, and attention should be paid to this point by breeders. It is said that cross with a self-cross, such as blue or black, is often of great advantage in obtaining the tawny chin, and certainly a great many of the noted cats of today are the result of such a cross.

Tortoise-shells and creams are also an allowable cross for oranges; in fact, "Minotaur" was bred from Ch. Midshipmite, a cream (son of a blue sire and a blue tortoise-shell mother, daughter of Jael), and a dark tortoise-shell "Romaldkirk Wallflower" (daughter of Toga, a blue, ex Torpedo, a tortoise-shell, also a daughter of "Fluffie," the blue and cream, and granddaughter of Jael). From this it will be seen that tortoise-shell is sometimes of great value in breeding both oranges and creams, although breeders will note that "Minotaur" is really a direct descendant of the wonderful headed "Jael" on both sides of the pedigree.

The wonderful coated orange, "Hamish," now in this country, is a descendant, I believe, of the noted blue Ch. Bundle and the two oranges, "Torrington Rufus" and "Torrington Sunnysides," are his sons. Sometimes an orange is obtained from a brown tabby cross, as, for instance, Miss Ward's "Robin," a son of Ch. Persimmon, and the well-known English winner, "The King's Own," whose sire was "Prince," a brown tabby, dam also a brown tabby.

Very few, if any, of the present day winners in England are bred from orange on both sides, probably because females are still so scarce there. At Westminster, in 1902, only three appeared, two of Mrs. Vidal's Calendula and Buttercup, both of unknown pedigree, and Miss Beal's old winner, "Garnet," born in 1898 and bred from the cream Midshipmite ex "My Fluff," a tortoise-shell.

We think orange is a very popular breed over here, and Americans certainly have the advantage of more females to breed from; therefore, it is only to be expected that the orange classes at our shows will soon be as well filled as the silver classes are at New York, which is saying a good deal, although, perhaps, the orange cat is one of the hardiest and easiest to rear of any, and usually grows very large, for which reason, perhaps, size is always counted when judging this variety.

Perhaps I need hardly mention that an orange with white is an orange spoilt, and that such a specimen would be neither shown nor bred from in England. Breeders in this country are far too prone to keep cats with more or less white on them, when, if they could only be made to see this subject in the right light, it is far better to chloroform such mismarked specimens or sell them entirely for pets than to keep them as breeding cats, thereby tending to ruin their strain, both in value and reputation.

*Formerly property of Lady Marcus Beresford. Photo by E. Landor, Ealing, Page 191 **The Book of The Cat** by Frances Simpson. Published 1903, London, by Cassell & Co.