

WE THREE !

## Concerning Chinchilla Cats.

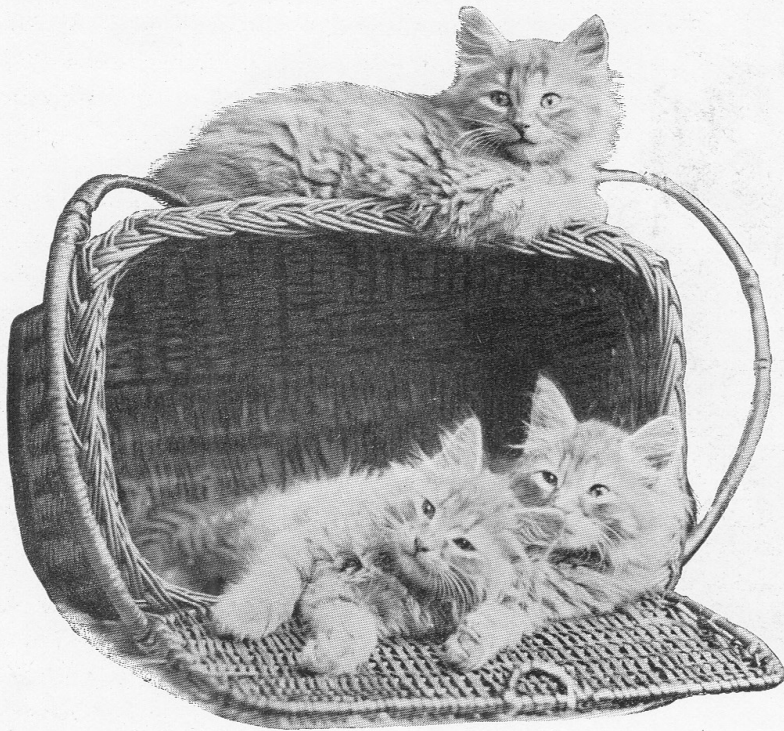
BY FRANCES SIMPSON,  
*Author of the "Book of the Cat."*

IT is curious what an influence fashion exercises on all matters that concern woman, and this arbitrary power is extended even to the choice of her pets. Certainly in Catland at present Chinchillas and Persians are the *crème de la crème* of good society; they are to be met with in the smartest and most exclusive drawing-rooms, and are eagerly contested for in raffles at fashionable bazaars. Yet really there is very little general knowledge on the subject of these fascinating pets, and members of the different species are frequently mistaken for each other.

To the members of the cat fancy the term "chinchilla" at once suggests a pale silvery cat with soft grey shadings; but to the novice the title is very misleading, because the cats usually called "chinchilla" are, or ought to be, quite unlike the fur of that name, which is dark at the roots and lighter towards the tip. No breed of Persian cats has been so much discussed



BEAUTY'S EYES.



THREE CANADIAN CREAM KITTENS.

by clubs, societies, and individual members of the fancy as these chinchilla or silver cats. They have puzzled judges and exhibitors alike, because when a separate classification was given for silvers and shaded silvers, the difficulty of knowing the amount of markings that constituted a shaded silver was very great. No two judges drew the line at the same animal, so that at one show a cat might win all the honours as a chinchilla or silver, and a little later on would have the same prizes as a shaded silver. Many were the heart-burnings over fine specimens being labelled "Wrong Class."

So much has been said and written on this special variety of Persian cat, but as the fancy is ever on the increase I feel it will not be out of place to give some definition of the terms chinchilla or silver and shaded silver for the benefit of the novice. I have always strongly objected to these cats being called anything else than "silver": this title seems the most appropriate, and best describes the delicate colour of this most fascinating breed. They are all, so to speak,

shaded cats; but whether darkly or lightly shaded, they still remain "silver." Then comes the question of what is nearest perfection in this variety of cat, which has only appeared of late years, evolved from the old silver tabby and the blue. The ideal silver should be the palest conceivable colour at the roots that is not white, shading up to a soft silvery grey. It is this slightly darker edging to the fur that constitutes the chief charm in these cats. When a cat is in full coat these tiny fleckings are almost lost.

The shaded silvers, so-called, have a dark spine line, which gradually shades off down the sides of the body; the legs and head have tabby markings, more or less distinct. These cats have often been spoken of in the fancy as "spoilt tabbies," for they are neither one thing nor



A NOBLE BEAUTY.  
(Bred by Miss Greatorex.)



A "DIMITY" KITTEN.  
(Bred by Lady Marcus Beresford.)

the other, yet their claim to beauty cannot be denied.

It is necessary to explain to the novice that these silver or chinchilla and shaded silver cats are almost invariably quite dark at birth, sometimes appearing almost black, and often covered with distinct tabby markings all over the body. It is seldom a silver kitten is born light; but gradually the markings and shadings will lessen, and perhaps just the one mite that was considered the dark, ugly duckling will turn into the palest beauty of the flock.

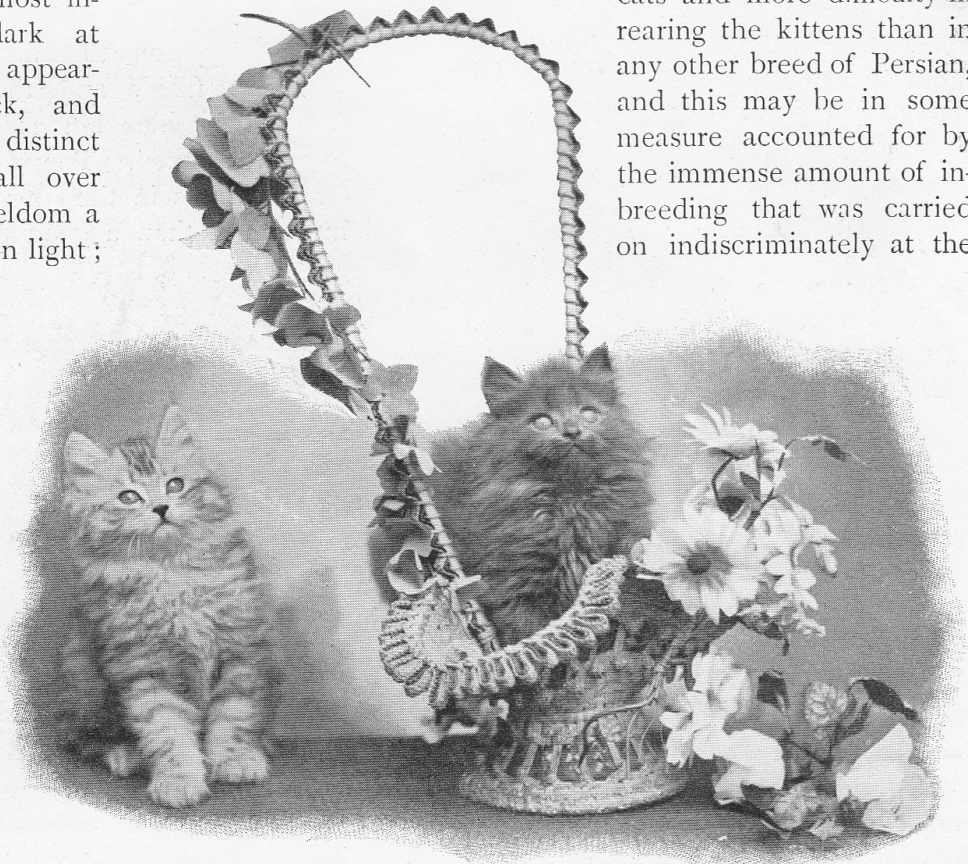
In this respect silver kittens may be considered most speculative, but in

another they are sadly disappointing, for a kitten may give great promise at six or eight months, and will slowly but surely develop into one of those nondescript cats that are neither silver nor silver tabby.

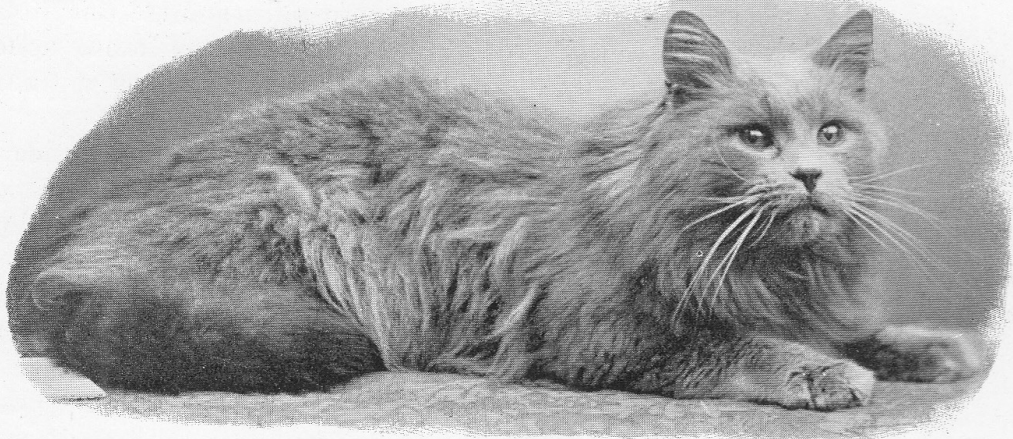
For some time it was considered that silvers might have green or yellow eyes; but the best authorities have now quite decided that green is the colour for this breed, and these seem to tone best with the pale silver of the coat. There is one rather peculiar feature in the eyes of some cats of this breed: this is the dark rim which often encircles the eyes, and which certainly enhances the beauty and throws up the colour.

Few Persian cats suffer so severely in appearance during the process of shedding their coats as silvers, and in the summer months they are really not fit to be seen, much less shown! The lovely, light, fluffy undercoat disappears, and even the delicate shadings seem to become dark streaks all over the body.

There is a greater delicacy amongst silver cats and more difficulty in rearing the kittens than in any other breed of Persian, and this may be in some measure accounted for by the immense amount of inbreeding that was carried on indiscriminately at the



SILVER AND BLUE KITTENS.

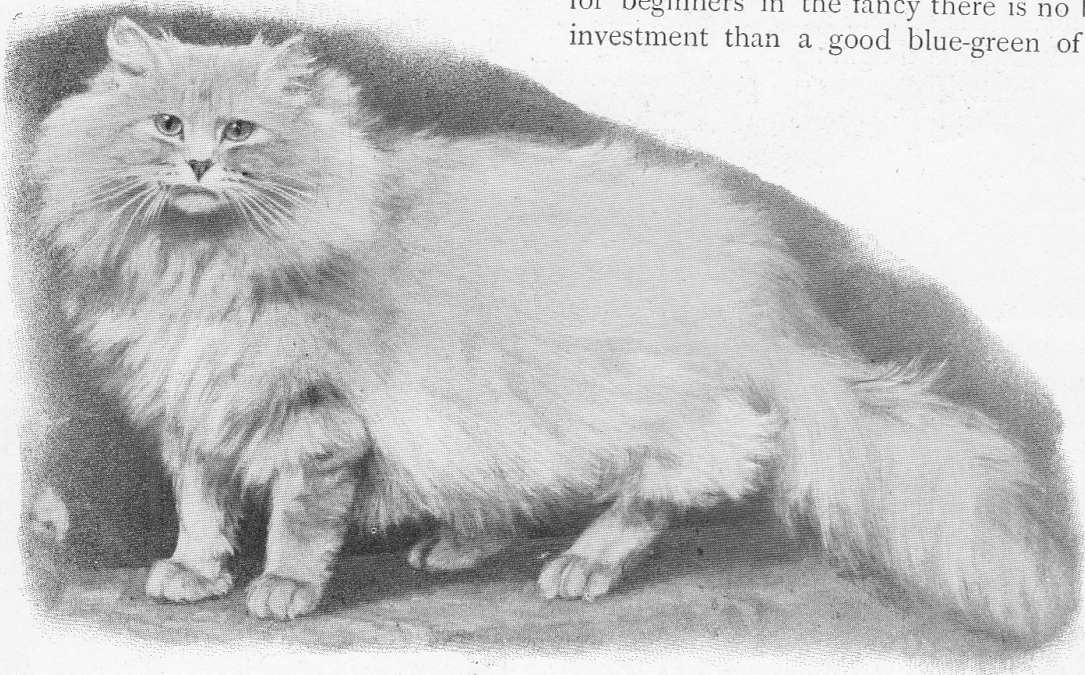


"DON CARLOS."

time when silver cats became the fashion. Then, again, breeders have been so anxious to obtain light-coloured cats that they have given a second place to the very essential qualities of bone and stamina. However, a great improvement is taking place, and there are quite a number of good heads and strong limbs amongst the silvers of to-day.

And now I will take up the consideration of blue Persians, a breed in which I have always taken the greatest interest. It is more than twenty years ago since I exhibited the first pair of "blues" at the Crystal

Palace. They created quite an excitement, as cats of this peculiar shade had not been seen before. They were called "London Smokes," and for some years no special classification was given to them. But as time went on several fanciers took up these cats, and a class for blue Persians was set apart at the Crystal Palace Cat Show of 1889. Since this date no breed of cats has made such rapid strides, either in improvement or popularity, as blues. In our present-day shows the blue classes are always the best filled, and there is a greater demand for blue kittens than for those of any other breed. Therefore it follows that for beginners in the fancy there is no better investment than a good blue-green of well-



MISS FRANCES SIMPSON'S "CAMBYSES."

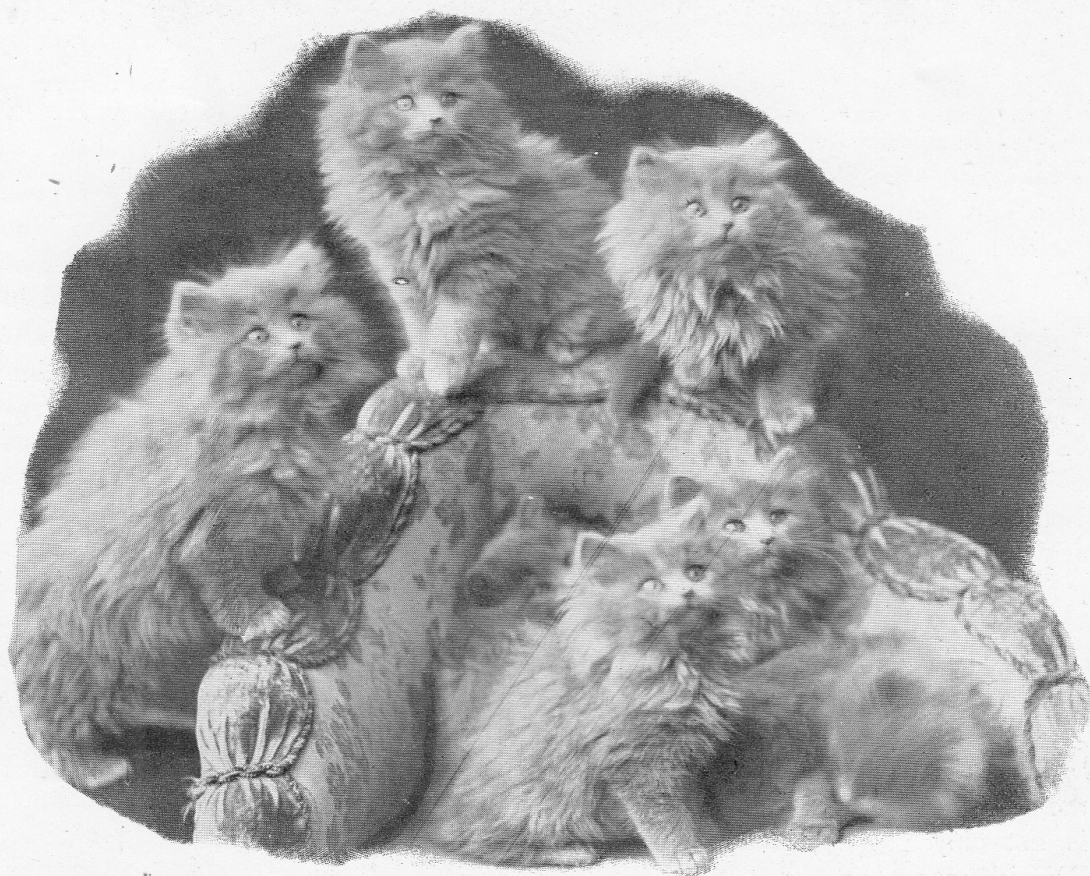
known prize pedigree. Ten or fifteen years ago there used to be no difficulty in obtaining about £5 5s. each for blue kittens, but now, when so many blues are bred, the usual price may be fixed at about £3 3s. for a good all-round specimen.

The term "blue," as applied to a cat, sounds rather absurd, and, strictly speaking, the colour is really grey. It is, however, much the same in shade as the fur known as blue fox.

Blue Persians vary in tone; but whether

So also as regards the colour of eyes. My famous old "Beauty Boy," a noted winner of bygone years, had bright green eyes, but now, in spite of his grand head, flowing coat, and splendid limbs, he would stand but a poor chance in the show-pen.

Judges may, however, be led into giving too much prominence to this one point of eye colour, for however desirable it may be, and assuredly is, to have deep orange eyes in this breed of cat, yet every other point ought not to be sacrificed. The eyes of all kittens

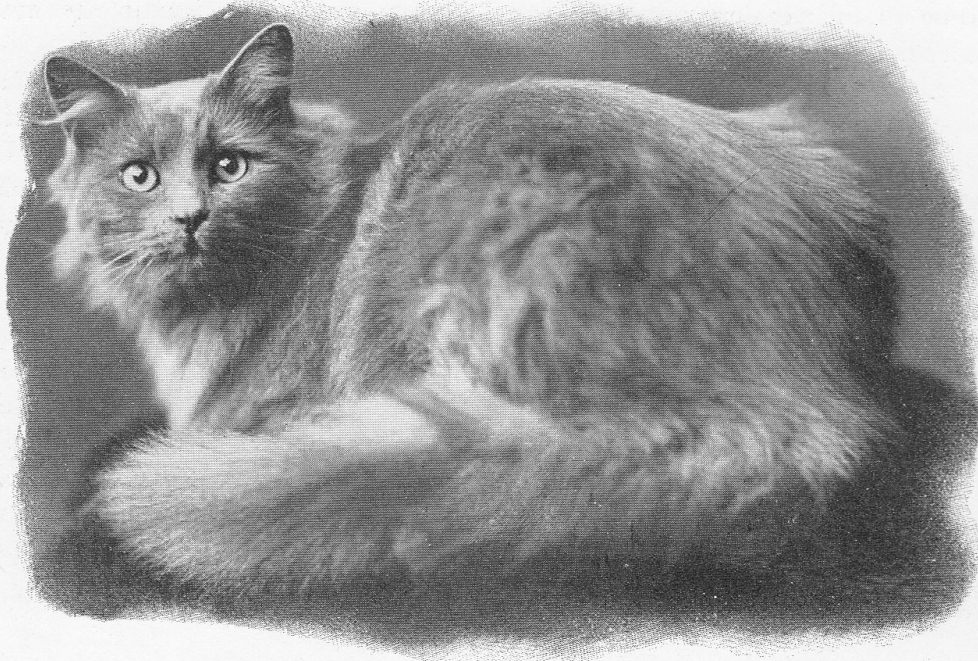


A LITTER OF BLUES.

(Bred by Miss Savery.)

dark or light, the fur should be the same colour throughout, so that when the coat is blown apart no light or white should be seen at the roots. The highest number of points are awarded for soundness of colour in blue Persians. As tiny kittens, blues often exhibit tabby markings, but these quickly disappear as the coat grows. A white spot on the throat of a blue cat is now considered a great blemish, whereas formerly this defect was not much taken into account by fancier or judge.

when first opened are blue, but at about six weeks old these gradually change colour, and the experienced breeder can tell whether the dreaded green or the hoped-for orange is making itself shown. There are many blue cats with what may be called indefinite-coloured eyes, neither yellow nor green, certainly not orange: these are yellow on the outer circle and have a green rim round the pupil, which, according to the time of day, will be wide or narrow. The perfect eye in a blue should be abso-



MISS SAVERY'S "MOSES."

of lovely kittens left recently for New Zealand, where their arrival was anxiously awaited.

There are specialist societies for silver cats and for blue. In the former club, "smokes" and silver

lutely of one uniform colour. There are, however, two distinct types which are correct, namely, the bright golden eye and the deep orange eye.

Blue Persians may be considered a fairly hardy breed, and they are certainly suitable cats to keep as pets in London, as their colour does not show the dirt.

It is not only in the English cat fancy that blues are so popular; our American cousins are great admirers of this variety. I saw several fine specimens sent to fanciers over the water. A short time ago two handsome blues were despatched to Natal, and a pair

tabbies are included. The Blue Persian Cat Society numbers about two hundred members. Amongst silver breeders the

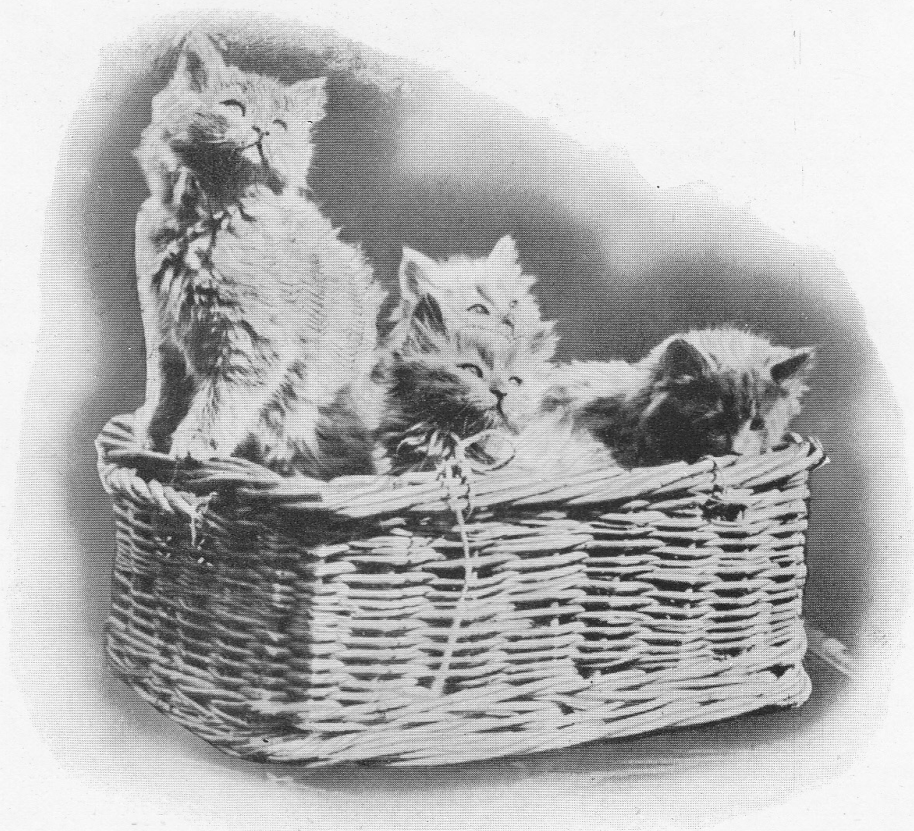


Photo by Mrs. H. E. Adams.

POSING FOR THEIR PORTRAIT.

name of Lady Decies is inseparably connected as the owner of the wonderfully pale silver female "Zaida," who has won more prizes than any other cat.

Lady Marcus Beresford has practically retired from the cat fancy, but still retains a lovely silver, called "Dimity," as a pet puss. Lady Maitland had quite a number of blue Persians at one time. Lady Rachel Byng and Lady Evelyn Guinness are new to the fancy, and have taken up this breed. Miss Gertrude Jay has the proud distinction of having possessed the best blue female ever exhibited, for "The Mighty Atom" was second to none.

Mrs. Slingsby has recently held her own at all the leading shows with her splendid blue males. Sir Hubert Jerningham has the

finest blue neuter cat I have ever seen, which will probably make his *début* in the show-pen during the coming season.

The pictures illustrating this article are taken from cats and kittens either prize-winners or from noted prize stock. The paleness of the chinchillas and the soundness of colour of the blues not being reproduced by photography, these points of excellency must be left to the imagination of my readers. The portraits, however, I feel sure, cannot fail to call forth the admiration of cat fanciers and cat lovers, whether they understand or are ignorant of those points in the chinchilla and blue Persian cat that must commend themselves to the critical eye of the expert and the judge.

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## WHEN TIME HAS CHANGED.

By GEORGETTE AGNEW.

YOU will not love us any more, you say,  
 When Time has laid his hand upon our hair,  
 Robbing its raven-black or golden-fair,  
 Has dimmed the fervour or the tender play  
 That alternates within our eyes to-day,  
 And drawn a line of suffering or care  
 About our winsome lips,—you'll cease to wear  
 The badge of love for us then, so you say!  
 Dear Friend, is Friendship's love so slight a thing  
 That it should end where ends the bloom of flowers—  
 When winds of destiny on Autumn's wing  
 Break down the beauty of bright summer bowers?  
 If this be so, how faint the comforting  
 In all the glad to-day's love-laden hours!

