

CHAPTER XVIII.

TORTOISESHELL-AND-WHITE PERSIANS.

THESE cats, both long- and short-haired, have always had a great fascination for me. One of my first Persian pets was a tortoiseshell-and-white, with a gorgeous coat, stand-out frill, and wide-spreading tail. shell-and-white should be. She was not a white-and-tortoiseshell, as so many now seen in the show pen might be called. In these cases the white predominates, and in reality the four colours should be about equally



"PEGGY PRIMROSE."

OWNED BY MISS TERRILL.

(Photo: W. Baker, Birmingham.)

She was so stately and dignified that we called her "The Lady Mayoress." In those days cats were of no account, and shows were non-existent. My pretty pet roamed at will and made her own matrimonial arrangements: the kittens were consequently mostly consigned to the bucket.

With my present knowledge of the feline race, I realise that "The Lady Mayoress" was a grand specimen of what a tortoise-

distributed. The patches of black, red, and yellow should cover the back, head, and tail, leaving the chest and paws and part of the hind-quarters white. There should be patches of the three colours on each side of the face, with a white blaze up the nose.

As in the tortoiseshells, so in this breed it is better for the brighter colours rather than the black to predominate. I believe an old-fashioned name for this breed was chintz cats.

I think they might also be called patchwork cats! There is a great deal in the manner in which the colours are distributed on either side of the head, for expression in a cat goes a long way, and if the patches are badly placed and unevenly distributed the effect may be displeasing, and perhaps grotesque.

Harrison Weir, in writing of this breed, says: "In a good tortoiseshell-and-white there should be more white on the chest, belly, and hind legs than is allowable in the black-and-white cat. This I deem necessary for artistic beauty when the colour is laid on in patches, although it should be even, clear, and distinct in its outline; the larger space of white adds brilliancy to the red, yellow, and black colouring. The face is one of the parts which should have some uniformity of colour, and yet not so, but a mere balancing of colour; that is to say, there should be a relief in black, with the yellow and red on each side, and so in the body and tail. The nose should be white, the eyes orange, and the whole colouring rich and varied, without the least 'tabbiness,' either brown or grey, or an approach to it, such being highly detrimental to its beauty."

This is another of the breeds of long-haired cats that may be said to have no history in the fancy, and I doubt if tortoiseshell-and-whites will ever be taken up seriously. There will always remain the difficulty of obtaining good mates for the queens, as males in this variety are almost as rare as in the tortoiseshells. It would seem that the corresponding males to tortoiseshells and tortoiseshell-and-whites are orange and fawns. I do not remember ever having seen or heard of a long-haired tortoiseshell-and-white tom cat; and as regards notable females, these have never at any time been numerous, and few really good specimens have been exhibited.

The most perfect type was Lady Marcus Beresford's "Cora," an imported cat of great size and beautiful shape. Her colouring and markings were lovely, and her round snub face and short nose lent great charm to this unique specimen. It was a grievous loss to her owner and the fancy when poor "Cora"



MISS YEOMAN'S TORTOISESHELL-AND-WHITE
"MARY II."

(Photo: D. Pym, Streatham.)

suddenly developed dropsy, and succumbed to this rather unusual complaint amongst cats. Mrs. Davies possessed a fine tortoiseshell-and-white named "Chumly," and Mrs. Bampfylde's "Susan" was a good type. Many of the cats exhibited have either too much or too little white, and often there is a grave suspicion of tabby amongst the black and orange.

Coming down to the present-day cats, I may mention Mr. Furze's "Beauty of Birmingham" and "Peggy Primrose," both of which he disposed of after shows where they were exhibited. There is no doubt these cats are very taking in the show pen, where darker feline beauties are at a considerable disadvantage.

I have had a difficulty in obtaining any good photographs illustrative of these cats, for, as with tortoiseshells, the colouring cannot be successfully portrayed by any gradations in tone, so that the orange and black both appear dark on a white ground, and

thus the individuality of the breed is lost. It is different in painting, when it may be generally noticed that artists choose to depict these broken-coloured cats in preference to the self-coloured ones. In Madame Ronner's lovely pictures, of which several adorn these pages, it will be remarked that almost all the fascinating fluffy kittens are patched in colour.

As I have remarked, one of the reasons why these cats have not been seriously taken up by fanciers is the difficulty experienced in selecting suitable mates that will be likely to perpetuate the breed. In fact, this is not possible with any degree of certainty. Tortoiseshell-and-whites may be crossed with

black or orange cats, and it is a toss-up what the progeny may be. Creams are sometimes bred by mating with blues, but there is always the danger of white spots and white toes. I once mated a pretty tortoiseshell-and-white with my silver "Cambyses," and the result was a good pale silver and an almost unmarked cream. Considering all things, I cannot prophesy any future for this breed in the fancy; in fact, I think there is every chance of these really pretty pussies disappearing from our midst. At the Westminster show of 1903 there was only one solitary entry in the tortoiseshell-and-white class! This was Miss Yeoman's "Mary II.," whose portrait appears on the foregoing page.



AT HOME.

(From a Painting by Madame Ronner.)