

EARLY MORNING CONCERT.

Flat Dwellers Have Fun with an Up-to-Date Cat.

In a certain flat in this fair town of ours, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer, there are a half dozen families and several single gentlemen. It is a nice flat, as flats go, but it can't avoid some of the defects that inhere to the flat family. When the head of the household on the second floor comes in at two in the morning the other flat dwellers are usually made aware of the fact. When the baby on the third floor cries—which it doesn't do very often—the rest of the human bee-hive is always painfully alive to the shrillness of the vociferations. In addition to these slight drawbacks, and a few others, the flat is a good deal like flats of the better class. People who have lived in flats know just what this means.

One morning a single man who rooms in this particular structure was awakened from a troubled dream. As he slowly came back to consciousness a shriek of wild agony rang upon his ears. He sat up in bed with a start. Again came a blood-curdling yell, a yell which died away in a low reluctant moan. The single man dropped his head back on his pillow. "D—ash that cat!" he growled.

But the cat wouldn't be dashed. In a most beautiful feline crescendo its voice arose and fell, but principally arose. Presently the young man also arose. As he moved across the room he said things that under the circumstances were decidedly excusable. Then he poked his head out of the window. The eastern sky was streaked with the glory of the dawn. The air was clear, and as he looked up toward the eaves above his head he could see the yellow eyes of the night disturber glaring down at him. He glanced about his room for a suitable weapon. There was nothing portable that he desired to renounce except the soap. So he fired three cokes of it at the warbler without effect, and the awful voice went up and down the scale, and the yellow eyes glared unblinkingly.

Presently he heard a light shuffling noise in the yard below. He looked down and there was a roamer in slippers and a pajama looking for ammunition to hurl at the cat. He had a straw hat in his hand, and he filled this with lumps of coal and pebbles, and then, taking aim from the best point of vantage, he unloaded his battery on the foe. The coal cracked against the brick wall and thumped on the blinds, but the cat bore a charmed life, and its voice rose high and clear above the din of the melee. With every shot the young man at the window prayerfully sped the missile, but his prayers were unheeded. Then there was a sound of opening shutters all along the rear of the flat, and heads popped out here and there across a dozen window sills.

"Why don't you kill that doggone cat?" shouted a hoarse citizen. "The job is yours," said the man in the yard as he dexterously flung a half brick within a half inch of the feline nose.

"Ha-a-wa-e-e!" howled the cat. "Great Scott!" roared the hoarse man, "why don't you annex her?" "I'll break her neck, sir," muttered the man in the pajama as he shied a piece of coal against the water pipe. Then the romantic young woman on the second floor appeared at the window in a lovely negligee garb.

"Poor pussy," she called in a high-pitched soprano. But the cat answered her with such a volume of what sounded like square-toed profanity that she hastily withdrew.

For two hours or more the cat held the fort, and then some unknown hero clambered up the attic stairs and dislodged her. Such is life in flats in the heart of a great city.

Weird Funeral.

Nothing could be weirder than the curious ceremonies attending the burial of a Burman priest, or, as he is called in his own dreamy country, "phoongyee." The funeral does not take place until three months after death, the corpse having been meanwhile preserved in honey, and placed in a box-like coffin of many colors and extraordinary ornaments. Toward noon the pulsing pause of the drying day is broken by a hum of far-away incantations which rise and fall drowsily, and one knows that the burial service is going forward. The coffin has been raised to the top of a huge gilded bamboo erection, and is being swung monotonously to and fro on the bare shoulders of 40 or 50 Burmans. The chanting never ceases, nor the queer gliding backward and forward. Until sunset the incantations beat away on the stilly air without a pause. Then the coffin is shot off the bamboo onto the funeral pyre, and as the red sun sinks the whole thing is set alight.

A Vermont family that started out to name the children to commemorate their birthdays has one born on the 4th of July christened Freedom, and another identified with the great storm nine years ago is called Blizzard.

DIED FROM FRIGHT.

Mexican Woke Up to Find a Rattler in His Lap.

"One of the most remarkable incidents of death by fright that I ever came across," said "Tony" the other day, "happened in Mexico several years ago, when I was making a trip through the upper portion of the republic on horseback. We had in the crowd a couple of Mexicans, who did the camp work and cooked for the party, which included besides myself a couple of friends. One evening one of the Mexicans was absent for several hours from the camp, and I started out to find him. I went into the bush in the direction I had seen the fellow go, and I had not walked more than a quarter of a mile before I caught sight of Manuelo, that was his name, reclining in a comfortable manner against the trunk of a small mesquite bush. As I drew nearer I was surprised to see the fellow's face set in a fearful stare, just as if he might have seen a ghost. My astonishment was considerably accentuated when I observed, coiled in Manuelo's lap, a large rattler. The snake was swaying its head in a languorous manner, hissing slightly, but not rattling. It had not seen me as yet. I took out my pistol with a purpose of killing the snake, as bad a marksman as I was, and I dared not make a noise for fear the snake would bury its fangs in the flesh of the Mexican. I crept toward the pair. There was a sudden cessation in the hissing, and the head swayed no more. It had heard me. There was a sudden uncoiling of its folds, and before I could shoot the rattler slipped off the lap of Manuelo and disappeared. The Mexican still gazed into vacancy with the same awful stare of horror I had first noticed. I put my hand upon his shoulder and there was no response. He was dead. Actually, as it turned out, killed by fright. He must have gone to sleep, and while slumbering the rattler had crawled from the bush into his lap. Awakening, the unfortunate man must have seen the snake before he moved, and held fascinated by the gaze of the reptile, and realizing that to move must be death, had stood the strain until the horror had killed him."—N. O. Times-Democrat.

IDENTIFIED.

A Parody on a Type of Woman Sometimes Seen.

"Well, Mary," asked the modern husband, "what have you been doing to-day?" The modern woman was taking off her bonnet. "Everything," she answered. "I've had such a busy day you can't imagine. At nine this morning we had a reading at Mrs. X's—such a beautiful reading. Mrs. X read us a paper on the 'Architecture of the Probable Capital of Mars—I do wish you could have heard it, dear—and after that Prof. W. gave us a little talk on the 'Microscopic Insects of Central Africa.' It was so interesting."

"It must have been." "Then at 11 there was a meeting of the 'Seventeen Great Religions Club,' and at 11:30 a meeting of the ways and means committee of the 'Society for the Reformation of Murderers.'" "Yes."

"And at noon I lunched with Mrs. Z."

"Yes." "And in the afternoon we went to the spring theatricals of the 'Women's Garrick Club.' And then coming home I saw such a lovely child playing in the street in front of our house. Such a dear little boy. I quite wanted to kiss him. I wonder whose child he is?" "Did he have yellow hair?" asked the modern man.

"Yes."

"And blue eyes?" "Beautiful blue eyes." "And an old shirt waist?" "Oh, a horrid shirt waist." "Then I know whose child he is." "Well?" "He's ours."—Boston Budget.

Tarheel Intelligence Jolted.

It is told that a young farmer of western Burke county wrote to the state board of agriculture for information regarding some part of his farm work, and the board replied by a typewritten letter. This made the young farmer mad, he taking the typewritten letter as an insinuation that he could not read "pen and ink writing." He immediately sent the letter back to the department, with a message to them not to send him any more "printed letters," that he could "read writin' yit."—Morganton Herald.

A Great Traveler.

That a rolling stone may, sometimes, gather moss appears from the fact that a guard on the Great Western railway, in England, has just been given a purse of 100 guineas for being the greatest traveler in the world. His journeyings back and forth have amounted to 4,000,000 miles in 40 years. This beats the Children of Israel.

FUNCTIONS OF HUMOR.

Causes Us to Smile, But at the Same Time to Reflect.

Wit and humor are words very hard to be defined. Wit is so delicate and evanescent a quality of language and humor is so deeply rooted in the personality, both take so many forms, racial, national and individual, that no formula has ever been found to express the essential qualities of either. Very likely, too, wit and humor mean different things to different men, and depend somewhat on the individual's outlook on this odd and contradictory but interesting world of ours. They have certainly meant different things in different ages. In fact, wit once meant intellectual acumen, something which might be displayed in a dry legal argument, where there was no wit at all in our modern sense, and humor, originally some fluid in the blood, meant merely whimsicality of disposition, leading to extravagant individuality. In this sense words are used, with some modifications, by Shakespeare.

In the present century there has been a disposition to extend the significance of humor and to regard it as meaning that quality which leads a man to take a broad and tolerant view of the world, and not to be imposed on by the shows of things. This has come partly from an increasing perception of the justness and depth of the book of the Spaniard, Cervantes. Since "Don Quixote" is confessedly a great humorous book, the fact that it is not a mere comic story, but a picture of life, remarkable for its subtlety and power and truth, has caused men to feel that balance and insight are concomitants, if not essential parts, of true humor. The humorous man never gives an exaggerated value to social display or distinction, nor does he undervalue them. Thus, Mr. Lincoln, one of the truly humorous men of the world, was entirely unaffected by the blandishments of the great social world at Washington.

At the same time he never assumed to despise it with an affected rusticity, as so many do who are destitute of the true humorous perception. He saw "the thing as it was," as Bunyan says. It has been said sometimes that Mr. Lincoln was too ambitious a man to be thoroughly humorous; that is, that he overvalued the presidency. This is not true, for the chief magistracy of the nation is a very great place, not for display or for the receiving of homage—these elements Mr. Lincoln estimated at their proper worth—but for the opportunity of doing great things. The well-balanced mind ardently desires an opportunity of energizing in its proper element, and Mr. Lincoln felt this worthy impulse. Had he been actuated by petty ambition, or radically deceived as to his own capacities, he would have forfeited his title to be considered a humorous man in the broad sense.

The humorous man loves children unless, indeed, they are sophisticated, and then they become abhorrent to him. He loves real children because he finds in them the directness of perception and disposition to express the truth that is part of his own nature. He does not get angry easily at some little injury to himself or fancied slight; but, when he does get angry, he is very angry, because he is aroused by some grave breach of selfishness on the large scale. He is not apt to act wrongly. Like the rest of us he is fallible and human, but, as a rule, he sees the action more clearly than we do; he estimates motives more justly—even his own motives—and gives the good motives their proper weight. He sees the absurdity of wickedness. He is very apt to dissent from any dogmatic proposition, and to state and maintain a paradox, because he can see both sides.

He sets before us, if he can write, a tosy-tury world, but it has strict relation to the true world—not to some artificial world of convention or fashion. He is no respecter of persons, nor of wealth and place, because he sees that the things to which men attach most weight are unimportant compared to kindness and justice. Thus he is radically democratic.

In this view, joking may be a concomitant of humor, but it is not a necessary element. In fact, a vein of sadness frequently runs through the highest manifestations of the humorous faculty. The humorist, seeing things in their true relations, sets them before us by ironical exaggerations and inverted analogies in a new and unexpected light. In his presentation of life we find suddenly an element of truth embodied in absurdity, an agreement in contraries, which causes us to smile, but at the same time to reflect. True humor never raises an empty laugh.

It is through the writings of humorists of this type, from Irving to Clemens, that America makes her claim to have added to the world's literature.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

—More cases of consumption appear among needle makers and file makers than any other class of laborers.

A GEORGIA ROMANCE.

Foundation of One of the Largest and Best Families in the State.

A writer in the Savannah News has been delving in the records of a hundred years ago. Among the fruits of his toil he has unearthed a pretty romance.

A beautiful girl resided not far from Savannah, beloved by all who knew her. Her handsome brother was found early one morning in a corner of the rice field, dead, a single tiny puncture near the brave heart, showing where a gallant's knife had stolen his life. Grief in his sister's heart gave way to fury; she mounted her sable horse and dashed into the city. Before Tomede's tavern she reined her foaming steed and screamed: "My brother has been killed by a man of this town. I will give this purse of £1,000 to the man who will point out the murderer, and to him," drawing a golden-hilted dagger from her girdle, "this blade! Will no one speak? Who is the man?" For several days she repeated the scene, denouncing the unknown in furious outbursts.

In some way she learned that a young South Carolina gallant had dealt the fatal blow. He was even then on his way to Spring Hill to cross the river by night and go on to Charleston. Screaming to her negro servant to follow her she dashed away along the old Augusta road in wild pursuit; a mad race, but the intrepid girl set her pearly teeth and clung to her plunging horse. At the crest of a bit of rising ground she caught sight of the ferry-boat, just pushing off. In the stern stood the man, soothing his frightened horse. She screamed and spurred her horse straight over the steep bank of the stream, and, risking her life and limb, gained the sandy shore.

Falling from her exhausted steed she drew her blade. Useless—the boat was already ten feet out. She rushed to her horse, snatched a huge pistol from the uppermost holster and fired pointblank at the young man's broad chest. The ball broke his arm; he fell. At her imperious command the terrified negroes brought the boat to shore. Several gentlemen on board restrained her and lifted the wounded man. Under the overhanging banks of the stream, lying on the same cloak, amid the glare of pine torches, she found this was not the man she sought. A mutual love began that night. They were married and from them are descended one of the largest and best families of Georgia.

DRUGS AND MEDICINES.

Doctors Didn't Know the Why of Many They Use.

In the past few years a remedy has been discovered for certain conditions hitherto regarded as incurable, which is certain in its action, and which for the beneficence of its results stands unrivaled in therapeutics. * * * The use in medicine of the thyroid gland of animals is a logical conclusion from adequate premises; and the thyroid forms one of the few medicinal agents in our possession which are not given on purely empirical grounds.

It is a generally familiar fact that the majority of drugs are prescribed because medical history records that, for some unknown reason, they have proved effectual in the diseases in which they are administered, though why they should do so remains unexplained. In certain conditions mercury has a specific action, the nature of which is absolutely unknown. Quinine had cured countless Chinches (and hence the name cinchona) of her age centuries before a clever Frenchman discovered that malaria resulted from the activity in the blood of a vegetable parasite on which Peruvian bark exerts a restraining influence.

So it is with most of the remedies which the physician employs; he uses them because experience has shown that they will do good in the conditions in which he prescribes them, although he has not learned why.—Dr. Pearce Bailey, in Appleton's Popular Science Monthly.

Bicycles Made to Sell.

Here is a good story about cycles made to sell and not to run: A well-known woman of title had several times had a man from the cycle makers to execute various repairs to her machine—repairs which were necessary on account of the firm's careless workmanship. Her ladyship's little girl happened to be watching the work with great interest, and remarked to the mechanic: "Don't you think mamma's very unlucky with her bike?" "Unlucky, did you say?" was the man's reply. "Why, her ladyship's alive still, ain't she? Well, some of our customers ain't."—London Mail.

A Medical View.

"Physicians, as a rule, are bitterly down on the hard times." "For what reason?" "They say people have had to eat such plain food that they are too healthy to be interesting."—Detroit Free Press.

WAITING FOR HIS MASTER.

This Cur's Friend Loved, Was Jilted, Then Took to Drink.

It was only an ill-kept and ugly little cur that sat in front of a deserted East side shop, says a Buffalo writer in the New York Press, but the story it told was all the more pathetic on that account.

The big policeman knew the story well enough, so he spoke to the dog. "Hello, Jack! All alone yet?" The stump of a tail that was nearly lost in the unkempt wool of the small creature wagged a sad sort of reply to the officer and the entire collection got on its feet a moment, in response to the salutation, then it settled down again. It would not do to give anyone the idea that anything short of a genuine watchdog was on that lonely front step.

"Poor fellow!" said the kind-hearted roundsman, stopping just long enough to pat the dog for a moment. "So he is not back yet. Well, he will be here in a few days. Be patient a little longer."

The dog's story was well known to people who frequent the most doubtful part of Clinton street. He has but one friend in the world, and that friend is down at the penitentiary, doing time as usual for not being able to let liquor alone. Time was when John Thompson was a prosperous shoemaker, and he would be still, no doubt, but for his only love affair. When scarcely at his majority he courted a fine young woman and sought to make her his wife, but she preferred another, and Thompson took to drink when she turned her back on him.

He is only 28 now, but he is an habitual drunkard, and will spend the rest of his life in that state, no doubt. Before he was jilted he was as sober and hard working as anyone, but as soon as his lady love left him he turned reclusive. He has a little shoe-shop, where he does some work when out of the lockup, but he lets his neighbors alone. He is just the person to have as only companion a mite of a dog, and this creature is the perfection of devotion to his master.

Whenever Thompson is locked up the dog follows as far as he is permitted, seldom going home till kicked out of the station more than once, and then he keeps solitary watch till his master is back again. If the neighbors feed him occasionally he eats and wags his tail. If they forget, he fasts.

BEATEN AT HIS OWN GAME.

How a Louisville Attorney Didn't Get a Fee.

A barrister of the city court is very much chagrined on account of a trick played on him by one of his clients, thereby causing him to lose a fee of \$25. Several days ago a man was arrested on a charge of "shooting at without wounding." This picturesque figure of the city court, who brags that the rich coloring on his nose has cost him a small-sized fortune, was consulted and consented to defend the man.

Before the trial came up the barrister called his client from the courtroom and said: "Now, the only way you can get out of this scrape is to play insane. Whenever a question is put to you, instead of giving an intelligent answer just wave your hand in front of your face and whistle. The judge will at once adjudge you insane, and, of course, you will be all right."

The man consented to play insane and took his seat on the stand. "What is your name?" asked one of the attorneys.

The defendant looked idiotic, waved his hand and then whistled. Everybody in the court room began to laugh. Question after question was asked the man, but he answered all of them by waving his hand and whistling immediately afterward.

"I adjudge you insane," said the judge.

"Ah, what did I tell you?" said the barrister, walking over to his client and congratulating him. "That was a magnificent play. I will charge \$25 for defending you and would like to have my money now."

The alleged insane man looked worried and scratched his head. He never said a word, but waved his hand through the air, gave a short, shrill whistle, and bade the attorney a fond adieu.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Strength of Steel.

An experiment has been recently made in Vienna in order to test the relative resistance under pressure of the hardest steel and the hardest stone. Small cubes of corundum and of the finest steel were subjected to a test. The corundum broke under the weight of six tons, but the steel split up with a noise like the report of a gun, breaking into a powder and sending sparks in every direction, which bored their way into the machine like shot.

A Chance Yet.

"Love," said the more or less aged one, "is immortal." "Oh!" said the offensively young one, "you haven't given up yet, then?"—Indianapolis Journal.

SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOL.

Lays Its Claim to Greatness to One Eminent Pupil.

Shakespeare's school! The words come upon one with strange effect. It is so hard to realize that the very halls in which the great master of the English drama learned his "small Latin and less Greek" should still do duty as an academy—nay, that the very benches upon which he and his classmates sat should be occupied to-day by boys equally light-hearted, and, indeed, differing but little mentally or physically from their predecessors of Elizabeth's time.

Shakespeare's school exists and thrives, and some two years since the writer enjoyed the privilege of visiting this little known place of pilgrimage. It is known (as it was known three hundred and odd years ago) by the name of Stratford-on-Avon Grammar School. Documentary evidence exists that the school was founded about 1230, and subsequently added to and endowed by pious and worthy people, until Henry IV. finally took it under his royal protection and assigned to it an income. Another patron was Edward VI., the "boy-king."

The school is a quaint old structure of the stone and wooden joist kind so beloved by painters. It has very high brick chimneys and a level reach of sward in the rear, upon which the boys were used to bowl, play stool ball, and knuckle down to marbles. It is, however, too small for cricket. Over school and playground rests the peaceful shadow of the old guild tower of Stratford, with the almshouses and head master's house stretching around it. Not a stone's throw distant is the Shakespeare Memorial theater, and Holy Trinity church, in the latter of which lie the poet's remains. From the millioned windows of the large schoolroom one can easily catch sight of the remnants of New Place, Shakespeare's house.

Within, the wainscoted walls, black with time and from the rubbings of many generations of boys, will possess a curious fascination for pilgrims. The furniture is very old, a good deal of it older than the poet. In particular there is a quaint oaken table carved over with myriads of names.

The writer spent two full hours examining this table and its carvings for some trace of Shakespeare. He was at length rewarded by finding two very old marks a few inches above the right leg (the legs are new, having been added in James I.'s time), one of which read "W. S." and the other "Shaks." One may admit that the combination of initials first quoted is a common one, but let us at least cling to the hope that the poet or some of his kin cut that unfinished "Shaks." It is easy to fancy the boy William driven from his idle task by the advent of some meddlesome master.

Rev. E. J. W. Houghton, D.D., is now head master of the Stratford Grammar School. He stated that on the old whipping block which was destroyed by mistake about 15 years ago, the name "W. Shaxper" was distinctly cut. From time immemorial it has been the custom in English public and grammar schools for daring boys to engrave their names on the punishment block. In 1569, say the town records, Shakespeare's father, then high bailiff of Stratford-on-Avon, invited a company of players to the school, and the citizens, accompanied by their children, witnessed two stage plays in the big schoolroom. Perhaps this was Shakespeare's first acquaintance with the drama.

The old school is quite popular, not only in the town of Stratford, but throughout the surrounding county of Warwick. Both boarders and day boys attend its classes, and under Dr. Houghton's able headmastership it will probably increase in fame and numbers. But as yet Shakespeare is its only really great pupil.—Cleveland Leader.

Soliloquy of a Witness.

"I stepped into the courtroom at Napa one day," said Attorney Garret McEnerney, "while a murder trial was in progress. A prominent citizen named Wilson had been shot down in his field, and the only witness, a half-witted relative of the deceased, was on the witness stand for the prosecution.

"What did you do when he fell?" asked the prosecuting attorney.

"I walked up to where he was lying."

"Then what did you do?" "The witness paused, reflected a moment with contracted brows, to concentrate his scattered faculties on the matter, and then replied, very solemnly:

"I said: 'There he is. (Pause.) School trustee. (Pause.) Notary public. (Pause.) Justice of the peace. (Pause.) Delegation. (Pause.) All gone to hades in one pop.'"—San Francisco Post.

—At Plougastel, a small town in Brittany, all the weddings of the year are celebrated on one day. In February last 34 couples were married simultaneously.

L'ABELLE DE LA NOUVELLE-ORLEANS,

Seul Journal français quotidien au Sud, fondé le 1er Septembre 1827

Nouvelles du jour, locales et étrangères

Services spéciaux et par fils des dernières nouvelles du monde entier.