

THE STRANGE FATE OF LUCY-CAT.

[ANNIE L. MILLER.]

All night the snow had fallen in thick flakes, and now lay softly massed over the landscape. The gloomy and direfully suggestive garb of the old fir trees near the gate, had been changed to dazzling bridal attire. The patient tread of the busy wayfarers slowly formed a path to the village; each passerby left the track a little more distinct and marked his labors with the impress of another foot. Soon these prints would closely overlap and the path be complete.

Lucy-cat sat on the windowsill gazing up the road for her mistress. The morning had been long for her. Each favorite cushion had been tried, but even the old fashioned charm of turning about three times and plucking the warp into slender irregular loops, had not brought lasting rest. For hours she had stretched her golden tortoise-shell length before the fire, and closed her eyes until but a line of topaz light was faintly visible.

Lucy-cat was a beauty and she knew it. It was her habit to pass through the rooms with deliberate, arrogant step and apparent indifference. Nothing escaped her sleepy eyes. A keen observer could detect her emotions through the curve of her sweeping tale. That beautiful long appendage was capable of more expression than the countenance of many a human being. Sometimes, stiffly bristling, it resembled a large furniture brush; then again the yellow fur lay softly, insidiously in place, but the angle at which the tail curled meant much to those wise in cat lore. Her tawny coat had sable, tiger-like markings, and deep brown mountings brought out the golden flicker of her yellow eyes. Now a gleam of interest mingled with the mystic flashes of those great orbs.

Far up the road a young girl could be seen, in a red cloak and hood, carefully picking her way through the drifts.

"You dear old Lucy cat," she cried, on coming in, and gave her pet a hug. "We shall have sleighing, Lucy! sleighing! and now it will last all winter. Come and run in the snow!"

Out through the open door went mistress and cat. Mary gathered a handful of soft snow, threw it playfully and stooped for more. Already a yellow form was moving away over the white carpet, carefully planting each velvet paw in the indentations and footprints. Lucy-cat vanished behind a snow drift and was seen no more.

Weeks passed of weary waiting to Mary, but the golden beauty did not return. The snow fell again and again, and was packed in firm, frosty smoothness on the highways. The sleighs sped merrily over the surface, and boys and girls with sleds and skates joined in the winter's happiness.

In the seat next to Mary at the village school, sat a boy of her own age, named Charlie Marsh. He had long been a silent and unobtrusive adorer, and now wished to show a visible proof of his affection. Occasionally the laughing, merry girl allowed him to carry her books a part of the way home, but never far for fear of the ridicule of her own family.

Charlie had planned when the snow came, to take her for a sleigh ride. It was a fashion among the boys to have unique robes of furs for such occasions, and he wished his to be the rarest and finest. All the boys had been collecting the skins of animals in the hills and tanning and arranging them in patterns for sleigh robes. The skill and process were usually rewarded by the prettiest girl being tucked beneath the prettiest robe.

Charlie said nothing but eagerly sought his trophies. The labor was finished and the day for the sleigh ride

arrived. Mary joyfully tied her hood and rangaily down the walk. With one foot on the runner she first saw the robe.

"You have killed my Lucy-cat," she screamed. The boy did not understand. "You killed her, you did," sobbed Mary, pointing to the center of the robe, "and I hate you!"

There on a background of dark pelts lay a magnificent tortoise shell skin, with sable markings. The four paws radiated into the other furs, and the head had amber glass eyes with a sinister glare. A beautiful and striking robe, but there was no sleigh ride that day.

Years later Mary learned to forgive and to speak to her old friend, but between them still lay the indelible memory of a lovely form with soft golden fur, and the reproachful gleam of topaz eyes. Lucy-cat was avenged.

MUSICAL MENTION.

JOHN RANDOLPH.

On Monday evening January 23rd, the third Philharmonic of the present winter, was given at the Oliver theatre. It is a pleasure to be able to record so highly creditable a performance as was this concert. Lighter in some respects than usual, the program was not so popular as to be cheap, while it was enough so to command the undivided attention of a good audience. I was not able to be present until after the conclusion of the first two numbers; but in the part of the program to which I listened there was more certainty of attack, better intonation and noticeably, a more ready response from the players to the efforts of the conductor. There have been times when Director Hagenow has had the sympathy of every musician in the audience—times when his artistic efforts were defeated by the lack of plasticity of the band. But in this concert director and orchestra seemed to understand one another, and the result was a happy and harmonious one. It would be possible to detect and point out certain minor faults which in an orchestra composed of professional players would be less admissible—but when the results were so pleasurable and withal so beneficial to the musical life of our city, it would be an ungrateful task. Mr. Hagenow is to be congratulated upon his success—a success not less dear no doubt, because hardly earned at the price of arduous rehearsal. Nor was the director less felicitous in his selection of soloists. Mr. Will B. Richardson, the first trombone player of the orchestra, was heard to much advantage in the well known "Evening Star" selection from "Tannhauser," and as an encore in a ballad of Arthur Sullivan. Moreover, Mrs. E. Lewis Baker, another Lincoln artist, was heard in the great "Ah Perfido" aria from Beethoven. I use the term "artist" advisedly, for, barring certain peculiarities in tone production from the physiological point of view, and in regard to which there is room for difference of opinion, Mrs. Baker is a most finished and artistic singer. This performer does not sing like an amateur but like a professional artist. Her temperament, dignity, repose and other excellent qualities, combined with admirable control of the technical resources of a large and resonant voice of agreeable quality, make her easily one of the foremost singers in the state of Nebraska. Mrs. Baker was heard later in a group of songs, accompanied at the pianoforte by Miss May Belle Hagenow, and was compelled to yield to the demand of the audience for encores. The program of the concert is appended as a matter of record.

March—"Love is King," Innes.
Overture—"Raymond," Thomas.
Scena and aria—"Ah Perfido," Beethoven; Mrs. E. Lewis Baker.



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Invitation a la Valse—C. M. V. Weber.
Song to the "Evening Star," from
"Tannhauser"—Wagner; Mr. Will B.
Richardson.

Two Slavonic dances—No. 1 C major;
No. 2 E minor; Dvorak.

Songs—(a) "Der Doppelganger," Schu-
bert; (b) "Serenade du Passant," Masse-
net. (c) "Dearest Heart, Farewell," Strel-
zki; Mrs. E. Lewis Baker.

American Patrol—Meacham.

Serenade—"Rococo," Meyer-Hel-
mund.

March et Cortège—"La Reine de
Sala," Gounod.

NOCTURNE.

White, white I remember her,
Wh'c from her forehead to her feet!
The moonlight falling through the pane
Was not so white, was not so sweet.

She was a pool of moonlight there
Between the window and the wall,
And the slow minutes bathed in her
And went away beyond recall.

—Richard Hovey.

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