



At the Musical.

The cat on his fiddle thrummed hey-diddle-diddle,
In measure delightfully gay;
And three little kittens waved wildly their mittens,
And murmured: "How well he does play!"
While Puss stamped his boots, thump, thump, on the floor,
As a delicate hint that they'd like some more.
The pussy who fell down that horrid well
Arrived, rather damp, toward the end,
With Pussy Cat Mew, dressed in petticoat new,
And Puss from the corner, her friend,
Only one sent regrets—"Sadly grieved to have been
At London detained by a mouse and the Queen."

His Servant.

When Honore de Balzac, the novelist, stated in early life his wish to become a literary man, his father, who had destined him for the bar, was shocked and disappointed. Still, he gave the boy two years in which to prove his fitness for a literary life, and Honore was accordingly installed in an attic near the library where he proposed to work.

His mother believed that a little hardship would soon bring him to his senses, but the correspondence which he thereupon began with his sister shows that the man who was afterward to attain distinction in his chosen work could afford, as a youth, to scorn such trifles as waiting upon himself. In the very first letter, he confided to his sister the news that he had taken a servant. He writes:

"He is named Myself! And a bad bargain he is, truly! Myself is lazy, clumsy, thoughtless. His master is hungry or thirsty, and often enough Myself has neither bread nor water to give him; he doesn't even know how to shield him from the wind which whistles through the door and window. As soon as I am awake, I ring for Myself, and he makes my bed. Then he sweeps the room, and clumsy he is at it.

"Myself!"

"Yes, sir."

"Look at that cobweb with the big fly buzzing in it till I am half-giddy with the noise, and the fluff under the bed, and the dust on the window panes!"

"The lazy beggar gazes at me and doesn't stir, and yet, in spite of all his defects, I can't get rid of that unintelligent Myself!"

And the same stupid "myself" it was who afterward enriched French literature with a series of wonderful works.

Every-Day Moods.

If Mrs. Ritchie's delightful recollections of the Brownings are two anecdotes showing great people in their every-day clothes and with their ordinary demeanor. They, like the most humble among us, apparently have their own struggles with commonplace things, and must think of roast beef and new carpets as well as the music of the spheres.

One day the two poets entertained some friends at luncheon, and the occasion was one ever to be remembered. As the guests rose to go, after saying: "How delightful it has been!" Mr. Browning cried: "Come back to supper, do!"

"O Robert," exclaimed his wife, "how can you ask them? There is no supper, nothing but the remains of the pie!"

"Well, then," said Robert Browning, like any other hospitable and thoughtless husband, "come back and finish the pie!"

At one time he was calling upon the Carlyles, and Mrs. Carlyle of course made tea. Seeing that the brass kettle was needed from the hob, Mr. Browning took it up, filled the teapot for his hostess, and then stood beside her, still talking and absently holding the steaming kettle in his hand.

"Can't you put it down?" asked Mrs. Carlyle, suddenly, and the poet, confused and somewhat absent-minded, popped it down on the beautiful new carpet.

"See how fine he has grown!" cried Mrs. Carlyle, in pretended horror. "He doesn't know any longer what to do with the kettle!"

And sure enough, when Mr. Browning penitently took the kettle up again, its brown oval was clearly stamped upon the carpet.

"You can imagine what I felt," he said afterward, in telling the story. "Carlyle came to my rescue. 'Ye should have been more explicit,' he said to his wife."

A Bad Bargain.

If one man were able to cause all the lottery tickets which are issued in a year by the one great lottery of the country to be bought up in his interest, in order that he might be perfectly sure to get all the prizes, he would receive back twenty millions of dollars in return for forty million expended. That is to say, he would have lost outright twenty millions of dollars, all of which would have gone into the coffers of the lottery company.

This statement is based upon the safe estimate that the annual receipts of the lottery company are forty millions of dollars, and its payment in prizes twenty millions. It illustrates, as well as anything, could, the folly of buying lottery tickets.

The people of the country, as respects such an enterprise, may be represented as one man. As long as they support it they are annually paying out forty millions for it back twenty.

This is certainly not an act in harmony with the supposed sagacity of the American people. To go on indefinitely paying out two dollars to get back one is not exactly a bright and business-like proceeding.

Though Americans were among the first of peoples to despise and prohibit lotteries, no people, probably, tax themselves more heavily to-day to buy these unprofitable lottery tickets.

Under our laws, it is impossible for the sentiment of the country at large to bring about the entire suppression of this great evil. The majority of people of the State from which the lottery hitherto has operated have done what they could to suppress it. But in the meantime, the common sense of the people of the whole country, fully realizing the very bad bargain which the lottery offers, should so greatly diminish the profits of the scheme as to render it vastly less powerful in its own locality.

Lost.

It is often a matter of wonderment to those who have seen gambling carried on, even under its most alluring conditions, that it should not disgust persons of delicate feeling instead of attracting them. Even those who care little about the loose morality involved, might reasonably object to the degrading display of the lowest human passions among those who are staking their all in the hope of obtaining the "all" of some one else. The author of "Faces and Places" gives the following description of a sorrowful scene at Monte Carlo:

Looking in at 2 o'clock one afternoon, I saw at one of the tables a well-dressed lady of about thirty, with a

purse full of gold before her and a bundle of notes under her elbow. She was playing furiously, always staking gold, and disdaining the wild excitement of a five-frank piece.

She lost and boldly played on, with an apparent composure belied by her flushed cheeks and flashing eyes.

I saw her again at 10 o'clock in the evening. The bank notes were gone, and she had put away her purse, for it was easy to hold her remaining store of gold in the hand. It was only eight hours since I had last seen her, but in the meantime she had aged by at least ten years.

She sat looking fixedly on the table, from time to time moistening her dry lips with a scarcely less dry tongue. Her face wore a look of infinite sadness, which might have been best relieved by a burst of tears; but her eyes were as dry as her lips, and she stared stonily, staking her napoleons till the last was gone. This accomplished, she rose, with evident intent to leave the room, but catching sight of a friend at another table, she borrowed a handful of napoleons, and played on.

In ten minutes she had lost all but a single gold-piece. Leaving the table again, she held it up between her finger and thumb, and showed it to her friend with an hysterical little laugh.

It was her last coin, and she evidently devised it for some such matter-of-fact purpose as paying her hotel bill. If she had turned her back on the table and walked straight out, she might have kept her purpose, but the ball was still rolling, and there remained a chance.

She threw down the coin, and the croupier raked it in amid a heap of others which might have been better or even worse spared.—Youth's Companion.

Story of the Rattle-Snake.

The rattle-snake is properly a representative of America, as the animal is found in no other part of the world. The eye of the creature excels in brightness most of any other animals. She has no eye-lids, and is therefore an emblem of vigilance. She never begins an attack, nor ever surrenders; she is therefore an emblem of magnanimity and true courage. When injured, or in danger of being injured, she never wounds till she has given notice to her enemies of their danger. No other of her kind shows such generosity. When undisturbed, and in peace, she does not appear to be furnished with weapons of any kind. They are latent in the roof of her mouth; and even when extended for her defence, appear to those who are not acquainted with her to be weak and contemptible; yet her wounds, however small, are decisive and fatal. She is solitary, and associates with her kind only when it is necessary for their preservation. Her poison is at once the necessary means of digesting her food, and certain destruction to her enemies. The power of fascination attributed to her, by a generous construction resembles America. Those who look steadily at her are delighted, and involuntarily advance toward her, and having once approached, never leave her. She is frequently found with thirteen rattles, and they increase yearly. She is beautiful in youth, and her beauty increases with her age. Her tongue is blue, and forked as the lightning."

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