

Our Young Folks.

"A CAT MAY LOOK AT A KING."

BY EDWARD J. STEVENSON.

Many thousand years ago, when men and beasts and birds all dwelt together in good-fellowship and spoke the same tongue, it came about that the King of the great country of Nessun Luogo took it into his royal head to invite the the Bear, the stag, the Ape, and the Cat, with many other creatures, to come and live at court with him. The Bear he created Minister of war; the Stag he made Chief Postman; the Ape became Lord Chancellor, and the Cat merely a Confidential Chamberlain. Nor did several of the other animals lack good positions.

But not long had they all enjoyed these honors before the Ape, as usual, began scheming how to get into better credit with the King and the court than the other beasts, and especially how to cause the Bear, the Stag, and the Cat to lose the royal favor. This occupied him day and night.

After long reflection he settled upon a plan. One fine day he slyly remarked to the King, "May it please your Majesty, do you not think it would be amusing to hold a grand trial of skill in the palace this evening, at which each of us creatures beginning with my Lord Bear, Lord Stag, Chamberlain Cat, and your devoted servant, shall each perform some trick for the common pleasure?"

"Excellent!" answered the King, smiling; "for I am told that many of you are wonderfully brilliant."

"And," continued the wily Ape, "in order to prevent any practicing beforehand, let that feat which each is to attempt be jotted down upon a piece of paper, and let that paper be tightly folded up, and not handed to the proper animal until the moment his turn arrives."

"Very good," responded his Majesty. "But, you see, I know not what each one of you can most cleverly do. Do you, therefore, my Lord Ape, devise a feat for each, and write it within the papers."

Now this was precisely what the Ape had most desired. Nevertheless, he craftily exclaimed, "Oh, my Lord King, I fear that I too will make great blunders if I do this. Yet if your Majesty will solemnly promise not to tell any one that I and not you inscribed the commands within the papers, why, I will prepare them." So the King innocently promised. Away glided the Ape to plan the deeds for the evening.

Now the clever and quiet Cat, sitting motionless beneath the royal chair, had overheard all this conversation. "Aha!" thought he to himself; "so that is your trick my Lord Ape! But I will get the better of it and you, or it shall go hard with me."

Locked in his chamber, the evil Ape wrote down for each beast, except his mean self, something quite impossible for that particular animal to perform.

But for himself he merely wrote that he should make to the King and all the court a low and graceful bow! The Cat listened eagerly at the key-hole, and by hearing him spell each word aloud slowly (for the Ape was not a good speller) he easily gathered what each creature was expected to do. He resolved to tell nobody, however; he had a better scheme behind his whiskers.

When the evening was come and supper was over, the King, the Court and the animals assembled in the great hall. The King's only daughter, the beautiful Princess Squisita, occupied a stool of honor next the throne as a gracious spectator.

Great was the surprise of all, save the Ape and the Cat, when the King announced how the evening would be passed, and pulled from behind the throne a gold crown filled with many tightly folded papers.

But before his Majesty could open the very first, the Cat stepped modestly for-

ward and said, pleasantly: "May it please your Majesty and the court, I have heard this plan for to-night's sport. Whatsoever shall fall to my lot to attempt, gladly will I undertake. But do you not think it ought to be also commanded that whosoever shall succeed in his task shall be given a prize; while, should any of us fail in the contest, he shall be driven out from the palace in disgrace, and never be permitted to look upon your royal face again?"

"Well suggested!" exclaimed the King; "and, moreover, if any other beast present accomplishes it instead, why, he shall receive the reward. This is just."

To these rules all the courtiers agreed. The Ape had listened, laughing wickedly. The King arose and unfolded the first paper. Inside it the Ape had written, "To my Lord Stag. Let him leap boldly to the floor, head first, from the golden balcony above the throne."

The poor Stag, in utter fear, advanced timidly. He looked first up, then down. For the golden balcony was more than fourscore feet above the hall pavement, and one jump thence would undoubtedly smash to bits his beautiful horns, and break every one of his four thin and long legs—to say nothing of his neck.

"Alas, my Lord King," he was fain to falter out, "I can not attempt this thing."

"Can you, my Lord Bear? or you, Lord Ape? or you my noble Chamberlain Cat?" inquired the King. Both the other two creatures could not but decline. But the Cat, exclaiming merrily, "With pleasure, your Royal Majesty," darted down the hall and up into the balcony, and had leaped down and landed upon all four feet unhurt (after the fashion of all cats from the beginning of the world), before the King and court could realize what had occurred. The hall rang with applause. The Ape angrily muttered to himself.

Presto! The King unfolded another paper: "To my Lord Bear," it ran. "Run around swiftly enough to catch your own tail."

A stifled laugh arose. Of course the poor Bear, in addition to all his clumsiness, had no tail worth speaking about to pursue. He blushed and begged to be excused, reflecting sorrowfully on his exile. But if he was so unfortunate, neither did the Stag nor the Ape possess a tail long enough to catch. The Ape frowned angrily, indeed, as the Cat, upon the royal nod, bounded before the throne, and began so merry a race, ending in the capture of the flying tail, that all the court laughed till their sides ached. The Princess Squisita's coiffure shook down, a total wreck, from her vigorous clapping, and the King, enchanted, was obliged to gasp out, "Chamberlain, Chamberlain, pray cease, or I shall expire with laughing!" The Ape secretly shook his withered fist at the Cat as the latter received the rich gift the luckless Lord Bear had lost.

"To the Chamberlain Cat," read his Majesty, from the third paper. "Let him sing a beautiful and sweet song."

Now up to those days the cat tribe had been able to merely mew, and that very gently, save when conversing in the language of the court. Never a loud note had they been known to utter. Conceive, then, the fury of the jealous Ape and the delighted surprise of all the audience, when the cat modestly replied, "With pleasure, your Royal Majesty; for I have hitherto concealed from all world a great gift. I will now sing my most wonderful song." And with that did the Cat open his mouth and sing loudly one of those splendid serenades to which evening after evening have our back yards and roofs resounded.

The Princess Squisita blushed deeply as, with bowed head she kept her tearful eyes fixed upon the singer, for his song continued more than one flattering allusion to the graces and charms of her Royal Highness, and the tender effect they produced on any one who beheld them. She toyed with the lute in pleasing confusion. As for the delighted King and his courtiers, they listened until the strains

affected them quite too much, whereupon his Majesty begged the minstrel to stop. So again was the Cat a bashful victor, and he stepped aside.

The King unfolded the fourth paper. "To my Lord Ape," it began. "Let him advance before the throne, and make his lowest and most graceful bow."

The Ape forgot his wrath, and came forth pompously. He bent so low that his hands rested upon the floor, as do the hands of his kind to-day. But, lo! when he would have raised himself upright, he found that two pieces of strong wax had been placed just where he had pressed his palms. Vainly did he strive to rise. The King and all the spectators burst into loud and long laughter at the sight of his desperate writhings. The King grew indignant, and finally enraged, supposing that the Ape was acting some piece of buffoonery as an insult to him.

"Take the odious creature away, some of you," he thundered out. "I will have no more of so graceless, so unmannerly a knave." The miserable Ape was pulled from the floor, howling. Easy is it to imagine how the Cat quickly sprang out, after the Bear and the Stag had alike declined to redeem their lost credit; and that he, keeping warily clear of that dreadful wax, made so elegant a series of bows, and, sitting in a dignified position upon his tail, waved to all present such graceful salutes with his paws, that the court were in raptures.

"Enough," said the King, starting up and tearing up all the crowful of paper. "You are all stupid, awkward, ill-bred animals, the Cat alone excepted. I will witness no more of your wretched efforts. Away, one and all of you, and never let me catch one of you in my presence or raising his eyes to me again! Upon you alone, most accomplished and delightful Lord Chamberlain Cat, shall my royal favor be lavished for evermore; and since you have sometimes hinted that it would please you to change your bachelor condition, why, the hand of my beauteous daughter, the Princess Squisita, shall go along with it. Henceforth only Cats shall have a right to dwell in the houses of men, and only a Cat may look at a King."

And thus and thus only was it that the famous proverb arose, and hence it is that only a Cat to-day is entitled to stare royalty out of countenance. As for the defeated Ape his struggles to rise from that fatal bow before the throne permanently injured his backbone, for ever since no ape has been able to stand perfectly upright.

A Dog at the Telephone.

The telephone has enabled a physician, several miles away, to detect whether a child had the croup. The child's mouth was held near to the mouth-piece of the instrument, and the physician heard it cough. But more singular than this is the following case of a dog recognizing its master's voice through the telephone: Jack is a coach dog that found his master by telephone. In some way Jack got lost, and fortunately was found by one of his master's friends, who went to his office and asked by telephone if the man had lost his dog. "Yes, where is he?" was the reply. "He is here. Suppose you call him through the telephone." The dog's ear was placed over the ear-piece and his master said, "Jack! Jack! how are you, Jack?" Jack instantly recognized the voice and began to yell. He licked the telephone fondly, seeming to think his master was inside the machine. At the other end of the line the gentlemen recognized the familiar barks, and shortly afterward he reached his friend's office to claim his property.—*Sidney (Australia) Eye.*

The Duke of Wellington, on being asked by Lord Warnccliffe, "Is drunkenness, in your opinion, the great parent of all crime in the British army?" replied, "Invariably!"

SCENES IN TANGIERS.

Strange Sights in the Streets of the Morocco Capital.

Just below the hotel and outside the gate of the city is the soko or market-place. On Sundays and Thursdays it is filled with a motley crowd, who bring game, meat, eggs, fowl, and other provisions from the surrounding country. It is here that Gibraltar obtains its supplies.

Here you see the genuine Bedouin Arab. Wild and dirty as he is, he is clean when compared with the horrid-looking men from the Riff coast, descendants of the old pirates. They are wild and untamed, and fiercer than wild animals. They do not even cover their heads. Their heads are closely shaved after leaving a lock by which they fervently believe that Mohammed will pull them up to heaven. The Jews are very numerous. They are known by their peculiar dresses. They cringe to the dust and put up with every insult so as to remain in Tangiers.

The noise and din in the market-place is infernal. At least five thousand tongues are at work. You can hardly force your way through the crowd. Once on the outskirts you are lost in great herds of cattle and strings of loaded donkeys from Brbary. These little creatures carry wonderful loads. They look small by the side of the camels. These animals, relieved of their loads, are lying down in a circle with their fore-legs tied together. Near them are numbers of goatskin tents, filthy in the extreme, and only high enough to sit under. The confusion is terrible. Some of the men are banging on drums, and others are playing the khutah, which is infinitely worse than the Moorish drum.

On passing through two gates we came to a fountain. It was surrounded by a mob of water-carriers. Tattered rags fluttered over their naked legs. They fought fiercely for precedence in filling their water skins. Women whose faces were covered with the exception of an eye crouched on the ground near by, selling bread. The magnificent Moor in flowing white robe and spotless turban, strutted majestically by, not deigning to cast his haughty glance at us. The streets swarmed with children in various costumes. The small shops were packed with men sitting cross-legged. Above, below, around, and beneath there was dirt of every description. Fortunately for us, the vile smells had been tempered by recent rain. In summer the stench is said to be almost unbearable.

This morning we were awakened early by a great noise. We heard cries, shouts, and beating of drums, the firing of guns, and the steady tramp of animals, biped and quadruped. These were the thousands who had filled the "soko" returning to their home in Fez, Morocco, and the great desert of Sahara. There is, however, a dense resident population.—*Cor. New York Sun.*

Feline Prescience.

I must give a fact which was communicated to me many years ago by an old physician, of which the good old man assured me he was an eye witness. In his house were two old cats, each with a litter of kittens but a few days old. One of the cats was very young, it was her first litter, and the old cat was her mother. It was noticed that the younger cat did not seem well. Each one had her litter by herself, although both were in the same room. As the old cat lay suckling her own litter the young cat came to her mother and made a low mewing, then went to her own litter. The old cat followed her immediately began removing the grand-kittens, adding them to her own. The truth was, she had adopted them, and seemingly at the request of their mother, for not many minutes more had elapsed before they were orphaned by their mother's death.