

SCORN AND PRIM:  
VANCOUVER CATS



A DELEGATE

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SCORN AND PRIM:  
Vancouver Cats



By PEACE RETARD

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By A. P. Donnelly

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# SCORN and PRIM:

## Vancouver Cats

### INTRODUCTION

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Two old tomcats in Vancouver,  
Prone to militant manoeuvre,  
    Nightly warded off defeats  
    In the free-for-all retreats,  
Rendezvous of pet and rover.

Tribal laws did they enact;  
Each of foe would fain exact  
    Eye for eye, as Scripture saith,  
    In the last embrace of death,  
Disrespect to counteract.

One back fence they jointly shared;  
Yards to east and west they paired;  
    Vacant lots and suburbs quiet  
    Called them oft to quell a riot,  
Or discipline a rising laird.

They had foraged New Westminster  
And despatched, by process sinister,  
    Every cat that made a stand  
    'Gainst a general reprimand—  
Convalescent tom or spinster.

Theirs, the parting fight, remained;  
To it--from it they were chained,  
    For each felt distinct in caste  
    And, on all occasions past,  
Introduction had disdained.

Fields to conquer they now had none ;  
Each a peer had—only one ;  
    So that pride which had withheld  
        them  
    Just as strongly now impelled them  
Both to cross the Rubicon.

Fate, it was, had kept apart  
These two gladiators tart :  
    Even Fate worked day and night  
    To arrange some other fight,  
And advantage took of pride—  
Small traits in great natures hide—  
    That she might designs fulfil  
    Conformable to Satan's will.

A drama weird will now unfold  
Wherein, by magic arts and bold,

The prince of mischief bares a  
warning  
Witches' darkling page adorning  
In their last Hibernian hold.

## CANTO I.

Bold seafaring cats once stranded  
On Queen Charlotte Islands handed  
To the mercy of old Pacific,  
With his calms and gales terrific,  
A scroll in an Indian bottle.  
Buoyed was this by sea-proof wattle  
Banded by imperishable beads  
Thus inlaid with shells: "Who this  
reads,  
If he fail not, from his jacket,  
When he lands, to mail in packet,

Marked: 'Kilkenny Guild,'  
He will have for his reward  
More than stranded cats' regard,  
If he will his name, address,  
And his native tongue confess  
To the Dean of the Guild, Sir Peace  
Retard."

\* \* \* \* \*

As a British sailor lay  
Hearing yarns of a fur trader gray,  
An old manuscript foretelling  
The exact accounts forthwelling  
Recollection did portray.

It was mailed to his grandfather  
In the year—obscured rather—  
    But it fell to him by lot,  
    Though its lore he cared for not,  
Or too faithless was to bother.

Now, because so much came true  
And fortune he had yet to woo,  
    He took down the yellow roll,  
    Read and fondled scroll on scroll  
As his wonder greater grew.

China's gold had beckoned to man  
When for a trinket sea otter ran;  
    Quadra, Cook, Vancouver and Gray  
    Took it in place of the endless bay,  
Fancied Strait of Anian.

There were beaver and caribou,  
Indian brown to white man true,  
Priests in surplice God's sick con-  
soling,  
Daring Scots new maps unrolling,  
Factor, bastion, gun, canoe.

The passage growing sounded holy,  
And he scanned its meaning slowly:  
"Mark when the salmon swarm the  
straits  
To stem the rivers—million and  
mates,  
From salt deep to freshes shoaly.

Four years they spend in secret  
roaming  
Through the amber light or gloaming  
Of their oozy feeding ground;  
Then, unerring, as the scent in  
hound,  
They return—like pigeons homing—

To the balmy waters natal—  
Vital these were once, now fatal—  
Whence to sea they went as minnow,  
Leaping cheerily as the mountain  
stream;  
Thither solemnly they struggle to  
winnow  
Their spawn—the boon of their lowly  
dream.

When these red-fleshed fishes turn  
Homeward, bruise and cataract to  
spurn,  
Starving to feed posterity stern,  
From them how to win fortune  
learn—  
Race them, you, to the higher levels,  
Where snow waters gouge like devils  
River gravels and canyons rugged,  
Loosening many a golden nugget,  
Scattering them in onward revels.”

Here again had fortune knocked;  
But these treasures, too, were locked  
    In the vaults of cities grand  
    Nestling now in a cradle-land  
By an arm of ocean rocked.

The sailor glum no more could brook;  
But keenly the old trader took  
    The parchment and read: "Wealth  
    here foretold  
    From trade in fur and search for  
    gold  
Concerns but man. One further book

Vouchsafed is to a thoughtless race  
Which these same shores in time will  
    grace;  
    But while of fur and gold we tell  
    In syllables plain, a witch's spell  
"Leaves time their mystery to  
    efface."

Postscript was added: "We cats  
raven

To unlock these stores were draven  
By command of a native demon  
As reward to offer seaman,  
Who, on reaching any haven,  
Would despatch to kindred witches,  
At Kilkenny Guild, vast riches—  
Ancient Aztec lore, and science  
Of extinct mound-building giants—  
On birchen roll engraven."

Thus ends history and romance.  
Now into sorcery we advance  
To dissipate the sacred spell  
Safeguarded in a witch's cell.

## CANTO II.

Through all lands lit by the moon,  
To hoot of owl and dove's low croon,  
The cat heard the family parrot,  
In terror perched in the garret:  
"You will make a journey soon."

Then Kilkenny cats, long favored  
With clairvoyant vision, quavered  
As they told to feline squires,  
Surging round in sougning choirs,  
How they sighted Satan's flunkies  
Batting stars about, like monkeys,  
While two cats, with liveries legion,  
Paused in this sapphire-glancing re-  
gion  
On a shadow to join issue  
For a comet's drifting tissue.

These stern signs no good betided.  
But witches' fears were not confided  
    To the judgment of the herd:  
    Cats to panic would be stirred  
And suicide by turns abided.

Underneath their haunted castle,  
Where Sir Peace and many a vassal,  
Wizard and witch, forever roam  
Through a desolate catacomb,  
Caffre sounded the trysting rappel  
Summoning votaries to chapel.

As softly then tolled an altar bell  
Each tinkle rose to pealing knell;  
Echoed solitude, dismal and fell,  
So did silence sound repel.

Swarthy forms in sooty weeds,  
Like shapes that fear in darkness  
breeds,  
Strode into that pitchy room—  
A brood of shades with mother gloom.

Then Caffre spoke: O darkness-lov-  
ing wights,  
Oft-times and gladly have you quit the  
haunts  
Of burrowing mole, by the sweet grass  
roots,  
And at my drum-beat stood as now;  
But never have your bat-devouring  
aisles  
Unsheathed society so welcome.  
For lately has mine Erebus been  
glaired  
With rude and stubborn light, and  
hideous skulks,  
Rattling like graves in earthquakes,  
Do make me fear the floor of day will  
crack

And let the lurid dazzle of the sun  
Into our caverns.  
But lest, by some illusion due our  
state,  
These visions are a mere mirage of  
hell,  
I sent Sir Peace beyond the castle  
dungeons:  
There he, chameleon-like, among our  
cats,  
Now wizard gathering silt with fays  
Where worms throw up their mounds,  
Now prowling tomcat everywhere  
among  
The night fraternities, has seen  
strange things.

Now spoke Sir Peace Retard:  
O Guardian Goddess!  
Well pleased am I to see a well fed cat  
Stroking her fur beside a cellar door;

And just amused when I do meet a  
puss  
Scurrying before a yelping hound—  
For cats enjoy both peace and trouble.  
But portents strange do now convulse  
the nights  
Wherein our harmless cats are wont  
to stray:  
Last night a crimson meteor sped  
The young moon's silver bow; then,  
From dim abysses silent,  
Flinty stars advanced upon their  
pivots,  
Flashed their spleen, and sank, crack-  
ling  
All the blue into sapphire splinters.  
Within an hour flashy fingers seaward  
Massed up the lurking clouds, and  
shot a rumbling  
Pall across the fires, while witches,  
panting inland,

Declared that lightnings, tipped with  
purple thongs,  
Whipped the up-ended seas,  
And day and night chased up and  
down the cords  
In thunderous conflict.

First Shade: What about our cats?

Sir Peace: I was a cat myself;  
And this very night as tempests  
wrung

The firmament, the alternate flash and  
pitch

Made mine eye-slits tink like faint  
heavenly

Cymbals; or that, or, from the beau-  
teous

Consternations meeting eye and ear,  
It was the music of scintillating  
thoughts

Sinking their gems, one by one,  
Into the during lap of memory.

Second Shade: How throbbed thy  
feverish eyes!

Third Shade: Do perky toads be-  
seech the lilies?

Sir Peace: The creatures of the  
day, venturing  
Forth upon the shimmering light,  
pause dazed  
At the strangers that tenant their  
haunts by dark:  
Sea mews honk in caves; bats sud-  
denly  
Camp under dusky wings where the  
swart  
Sunflowers droop; mice beard our  
cats;  
And, poor things, they scamper from  
all sides  
Unto the castle, clamoring to know the  
meaning.

Answered a mellow-voiced shade:  
The arches of this hallowed chamber  
have

For ages guarded omen and tradition;  
In every niche reposes idol, token,  
Book or vellum. From these our  
    charmed seers  
Have hitherto found keys to all the  
    pranks  
Of Satan. How cunningly he times  
These hellish glares that streak our  
    corridors  
To harmonize with thunder and  
    handiworks  
Of heaven—thereby to bring our cats  
    and us  
Together for some great mischief.  
    Let  
Every ancient shade bend to the  
    search  
To solve this latest caper.

They thumbed cob-webbed tomes  
    musty  
And fumbled deities fusty;

They stormed the deeper fellows  
Who were bending on the bellows;  
They vanished when Old Nick got  
crusty.

One cat-cursed witch he gaffed;  
'Bout the cats she stranded, he  
chaffed;

At her frantic lies he laughed  
As the glow from the shifting deeps  
Reddened high the fissured steps.

Poor thing—she weeps.

“O Satan”!

But he pitched her down a shaft.

With rip and rattle and crash asunder,

Quaking peal of plunging thunder,  
The piercing wail of a wretch fore-  
lorn

Unto that Pity Whence she was  
born

Fainted eternity under.

It was now that the bottle branded  
 By the cats on the island stranded  
     Drew the notice of the seers:  
     Among tales of buccaneers  
 Was a legend patched, but candid.

For the oracles at Kilkenny,  
 To unconquered cats there many,  
     Answered always since: "Vancouver"  
     —

Unknown then to salt or rover—  
 When they asked for battles any.

\* \* \* \* \*

Translated too from the savage tongue  
 This prophetic utterance rung:  
 "When sometime the friend of Halley  
 To the glimpse of earth will rally,  
 And a subtle obscuration  
 Will make starry scintillation  
 Quicken, as dips  
 Lunar orb into eclipse—

To much tribal consternation—  
This concurrence will be a sign,  
Only witches will divine,  
That the moment is at hand  
On a fern and fir set strand  
When two tomcats, doughty, cruel,  
Marked by Fate, will meet in duel.”

The witches now did fast consult  
And soon arrived at this result:  
“The place must be Vancouver;  
And from science we discover  
That on May twenty-third Nineteen-  
ten  
Will the earth in its shade the moon  
pen,  
While the comet, the firmament rover,  
Turning over, and over, and over,  
Like a bird, will down swoop then.”

Then in the far resounding caves this  
chorus  
Hung and died on fainter echoing lips  
canorus:

“Back in the ages hoary,  
When fighting was a glory,  
There was a good old story  
Of a fight that was to come.  
Cats nightly since rehearsed it;  
And, dying, for it thirsted;  
Yet we long since had cursed it  
For its gait was cumbersome.

’Twill take place in Vancouver;  
Henceforth all cats will love her;  
And their fighting will reprove her  
In her march to Kingdom Come.  
They’ll come back to Kilkenny  
Cat-fights and capers many  
From the land that spurns the penny  
For its gait is cumbersome.”

## CANTO III.

Cats had noticed sudden flitting  
And pretensions to be knitting  
When they called at the old stands  
To have palmists read their hands  
And tell fortunes them befitting.

Hence by couriers far and wide  
They secured by every tide  
Sleek ambassadors consequential,  
Armed with joint note and creden-  
tial,  
Wizard's reasons to abide.

With a story causing laughter  
Peace led on a little after  
    To details of ghostly visions,  
    Their researches and decisions,  
Climbing high the castle rafter,

As the cats in silent wonder,  
Seizing on each tail asunder  
    Or a hold on the wizard's breeches,  
    Like a colony of leeches,  
Drew down a moral thunder.

Desperate, the dean gave this com-  
mand:

“From every tribe in every land  
    Ten cats shall go this fight to see;  
    These ten by might shall chosen be;  
You all shall meet on Burrard  
    strand.”

Across the waves without their grips,  
Forgetting all about eclipse,  
Repeating: "Fight, big fight," the  
date,  
The way to go and not be late,  
Diplomats went in training crews  
And broadcast spread the welcome  
news.

Then every cat was candidate,  
And you should see the way they ate,  
The way they pommeled, tripped, and  
scissored

Every voter in that blizzard:  
A hundred fronts of scratching wrath  
Like porcupine on a turning lathe  
Would better tell how cat can fence  
When seeking vote and influence.

O suffragettes! O suffragettes!  
You wrong your natures sweet,  
For you are loved as fireside pets,  
But blushed for on the street.

In this civil war so sore  
Tom appears his wife before,  
And they fight for family pride  
Which to date turned not aside  
One encounter from the door.

Now domestic strife seems fitter  
As they jaw about the litter  
That will be left all alone,  
In squalor dearly to atone  
For the jaunts of parents bitter.

They will have no little spat  
To imitate the daddy cat;  
    No dame puss to half kill mouse,  
    Seem to sleep about the house,  
While the kitling calls him rat.

And as oft he comes to life,  
Feels the score of little knife,  
    Sweeps the room with beady eyes,  
    Sees assailant not full size—  
Not the one that made the dive

Behind the bag of flour there  
In the pantry, 'neath the stair—  
    He decides to make a dash;  
    But from hiding, like a flash,  
Lights an avalanche of hair.

Once again will kitten tease,  
Slap with paw, with needles squeeze,  
Till alas! bull mouse is late  
Getting home to wife irate  
Rocking mouskin craving cheese.

Who will teach them fence and spar?  
How to bring about a jar  
When excuse is none at all?  
When to spit at a rolling ball?  
When the milk pan's pride to mar?

So they shun yawning abyss,—  
Two shattered lives, the silent hiss,  
Hurry home to trundle bed,  
Where the downy kits, unfed,  
Stay awake for good-night kiss.

ze,  
But the others fought for place  
In contingents proud to grace  
The amphitheatre abroad:  
Battle scarred, each veteran squad  
Bore away the pride of race.

ar?  
Grand angora, silken tabby,  
Tortoise-shells from court and abbey,  
Silvered queens to hearths endeared,  
Lords in tiger, or marble—feared,  
Ocelots and Carthusians blue,  
Fishing cats of tawny hue,  
Cream and chocolate from Siam—  
So trooped colors to the oriflamme.

,  
Tailless cats from the Isle of Man,  
Tails truncated Malayan,

German cats from fatherland  
Keeping goose-step with the band,  
Chevaliers of France—polite,  
Irish for Home Rule to fight  
Lined up on each ocean strand.

How they stowed the holds below,  
How a slab they rode in tow,  
    Some high up in the rigging cling-  
        ing,  
    Others arm in port-hole slinging  
Matters little here to know.

To Vancouver all were bound,  
Rail or boat, the Horn around:  
    The chief expense abroad and back  
    Was keeping still along the track:  
E'en this they dodged by many a  
    round.

By each steamer from Victoria  
And the Puget Sound emporia,  
    On the overland Pacific,  
    Down the Fraser gorge terrific  
Came they—sailing from Astoria.

Siwash cats full ox-carts turn  
Like sheep tied on the old dog-churn ;  
    Holding the tail of a fast cayuse  
Others waved in angles obtuse  
Astearing from the stern.

Every back-yard, shed and cellar  
'Neath the blue canopy stellar  
    Sheltered an excited throng  
    Shaking hands their friends among,  
Telling of the big propeller.

Here were grandmas dotage nearing,  
Grandads stone-blind, with some hear-  
ing,  
Fair young belles pretending shy  
If a mischief purring by  
Turned on them the look endearing.

There were chiefs bereft of eye,  
Oft in battle left to die;  
Other tyros lacked a tail;  
Some a paw—but why bewail?  
Scars do heroes dignify.

Noticed, too, were the elite,  
Enamelled to their muffled feet,  
Shaking the tips of fingers near:  
“How sweet of you to be here,  
How uncouthly those cats greet.”

On this scene will curtains fall;  
Meanwhile visiting cats and all  
    Will be looked for in their place  
    When two mightiest of their race  
Will respond to the last call.

hearing,  
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et.”

## CANTO IV.

While eclipse was on the moon  
Thomas Prim to his back saloon  
    Did a few disciples feline  
    Summon, and they came in bee-line  
On the shadow to commune.

Thomas Scorn to his lawn for fun,  
By pedant not to be outdone,  
    Called some trouble-loving tabbies  
    To sit up and watch the Rabbis  
As they rolled their eyes at pun.

“He says it’s the tail of the comet.  
That would make my kitten vomit.”

Added Scorn: “I would die sooner  
Than admit that hybrid lunar  
Is the Sky Wanderer—ages from it.”

Silence pregnant in Prim’s war camp  
Followed challenge flung out by  
tramp:

Thomas Scorn reply awaited;  
Thomas Prim, the educated,  
Swelled from ear to vamp.

At last, their rage expended,  
His whole brigade descended  
Reviling, cursing, spitting,  
Champing, wheeling, befitting  
The belt to be defended.

Upon the fence they sprang and  
curled,  
Dropped, quick marched, as Prim this  
hurled:

“I propose to draw some sparks  
From the author of remarks  
Smacking of the under-world.”

Here the scene was slightly marred  
By a claw-hammer lighting hard  
Straight between the toms ap-  
proaching,  
While their body-guards, each one  
coaching,  
Each convoyed across the yard.

With a bound, marking decision,  
Tails all pointing in derision,  
They made shed-tops on the trot,  
Dropped into a vacant lot  
Where—what sights crowd on their  
vision!

Here two acres fenced about  
Swarmed with cats on a sharp lookout  
On this lustre-burdened night  
For a crowning glory fight,  
As Sir Peace had pointed out.

They were drawn there by the sound  
Rumbling weird along the ground  
Of some Indian cats at pow-wow.  
Here, with skirling, chuck and kotow,  
Circling a mound, where five tomcats  
Whacked a taut skin with bone slats,  
Danced a tawsled band and weathered,  
Painted with vermilion, feathered,  
Danced blood chieftains straight as  
bristle,  
Squaws haranguing, stiff with gristle;  
While, out-flanking the whole measure,  
Younger warriors tossed at pleasure.

To protect their sacred dance  
From all such profaning glance  
    Angry braves withdrew to tents.  
    Not a witness turned from hence  
But wore fallen countenance;  
    For it seemed the long sought fight  
    On this most friendly night  
Turned to pow-wow by mischance.

When hark! across night air!  
Beyond those sheds, a harbinger:  
    The impassioned miaow;  
    A brewing row;  
Window raised; curses; a racing pair;  
    O, two darling tomcats  
    Gross with combats  
Fell devil-may-care.

Time to parley there was none;  
Fire was shooting from each one;  
    To the centre of the mound  
    They were ushered on the bound;  
Every cat prepared for fun.

Chieftains old lined up in ring;  
Ladies legion next bowing  
    Requested were to remove their hats  
    To allow ordinary cats  
A fighting chance to see the thing.

What a sight for imprisoned moon  
Scaling the shadow on silver shoon  
    To hurdle the Rockies again—  
    The flower of cat kingdoms ten  
Like an autumn carpet strewn.

For what so serene as puss sitting at  
    ease,  
Her conscious tail there curling just  
    to please;

Two furry pillars cushioned at the  
base

Gently support contentment in the  
face;

No bar, no ring that frets the color  
ground

But folds of beauty follow it around;  
Proportion shares with grace each  
lissome curve

And rest holds motion captive in each  
nerve.

And here not idly did mewler blink,  
For wild expectancy made eyes to  
think;

While makes the moon one stray look  
duller

She warmed these troops to fields of  
color.

In the ring! Lordly black Persian  
Tom Scorn was a subject for conver-  
sion,

His back and tail so high in air

He scarcely touched anywhere;  
But rumbled forth a fervid warning:  
"Don't interfere if it takes till morn-  
ing."

Across was Prim, a handsome fawn,  
Rampant with tawny bar his brawn;  
To key his rage he wagged his tail,  
Careened like fury driven sail.  
One bristly arch! He would have  
burst,  
Had he not cursed, and cursed, and  
cursed.

An awful moment! On death em-  
barked  
The pent up hate and insult sparked.  
Malice aflame in Scorn's sulphur eye  
Shot challenge—did Havoc make re-  
ply?  
Ye gods! Ye gods! As adders rap  
They struck! They struck! A living  
trap.

Thud! Juggle! Flying fur of those  
    cats  
Filled the silvery air like a blast of  
    bats,  
The welkin ripped with each angry  
    gamut—  
If cat had soul those cries would damn  
    it.  
Teeth did seem hot coals to muff—  
They spat, they sputtered, they sped  
    enough.

The black deployed to win by  
    scratches,  
Lopping first the saffron patches;  
    But, while closed eye Prim is  
    rueing,  
    Scorn turns flank, a chance for  
    chewing,  
And the tail almost detaches.

Prim, by vaulting, escaped rabies,  
Swore he could pose for clean obse-  
quies,

But, if beaten, from hell he'd rise  
Decked with horns to civilize  
A desperado on his knees.

While they crack their paws like  
pokers,

The spectators roar like brokers:  
Every cat there backs a winner  
Though both toms are looking thin-  
ner

As they sweat and puff like stokers.

"One ton cat fur," bet by kitten  
With his cigarette all bitten,  
Promptly taken into port—  
"No odds wanted"—was by sport:  
"June delivery" in his mitten.

Never an eye off monocrats,  
Vaulting like two acrobats,  
    Was necessitated by  
    Placing side-bets on the fly,  
Tipped by wink from warring cats.

For old dodgers in the ring  
Toss to the kittens every thing  
    Which will open the dragnet large  
    For recruits making their first  
    charge  
Into gambling—and Sing Sing.

But we'd better call a halt  
At that last big summer-sault,  
    Just to analyze that diction  
    Glittering with foul conviction  
Prompted by each smart default.

Sons, they called, with sad suffix,  
Stuttering sons, pronounced by kicks,  
    Sons ejected from Hades,  
    Sons protected by ladies  
Or they'd long have crossed the Styx.

They swore oaths that raised the hair  
On blasphemers standing there  
    That had oft been isolated  
    In cat-barracks ventilated—  
They had to be—by prayer.

'Midst these rounds of death—in-  
    fernal,  
A reporter to a journal  
    At a bonnet shied his castor,  
    Said: "I'll see, or buy the plaster;  
I must get this to the colonel."

This brought on a savage fray  
And had ended in melee,  
    Had not lawyers caused a hush  
    By all pleading leave to blush  
For the ladies—without pay.

Their profession was prehensile,  
And they'd seize upon and stencil  
    Every reeking soubriquet  
    Gushing forth extempore  
As they stabbed about with pencil.

Darted they through the broad arena  
Where the pendulous ears from China  
    Were to back seats double-quickened  
    When fluff did with view conflict  
Of an arriving late hyena.

There'd be prosecuting after  
And no high technical rafter  
    Would outwit the last expense,  
    Taxed, with final impenitence,  
In the bill of every grafter.

For these legal limbs of cats,  
Eloquent in sharps and flats,  
    Would with pleasure break their  
    necks,  
Or see punishment duplex  
Visit vermin warming brats  
    Who came there in patterns dowdy  
    To disturb and act the rowdy  
With the fair aristocrats.

“Oh, I’d rather be divorced,”  
Sobbed a kitty, “than be forced  
    To use hat-pin bayonet,  
    Like a rushing suffragette.  
Boo-oo”: lively her blood coursed.

There was swooning at the back,  
But the doctors kind, alack,

Calmed each willing divorcee,  
Spoke of Rachel tenderly,  
Cooed, till fled each slight attack.

These were issues on the side  
As the toms each other's hide  
Flayed in all the variations  
Which would test the limitations  
Where a one-lived race had died.

Fifty cats all tails and legs,  
Fifty knives at mumbly-pegs,  
Caught by whirlwind, all then  
mixed  
Fifty tongues with—prongs betwixt  
Tore like devils on whirli-gigs.

To war gods entreaties went  
And tigers extinct, blows to invent!  
One fatal touch to borrow!  
At least for one more to-morrow  
Till they'd fight their hearts' content.

Clench! Wriggle! The end is charted:  
Rest! Cry! All power departed;  
Defy! Defy! No more they'll fight  
On this nor on any other night—  
They sleep with the lion-hearted.

Spartan maidens chanting sonnet:  
"Back to me with tail or on it,"  
Bore a carcass to each camp,  
Read both wills, the moon for lamp:  
"When falls my mantle, don it."

## CANTO V.

Side-trips for altercation  
With some cat of reputation  
Added interest to snubs—  
Scraping acquaintance at the  
clubs—  
Before incarceration.

Given freedom of the city,  
With three days to leave, each kitty  
Chiselled models for a Louvre  
From the raw cats of Vancouver—  
Fates, Laocoon and Pity.

Each distinguished delegation  
Fighting for mere recreation—  
Each defending its opinion  
'Bout the cats of the Dominion—  
Journeyed to its destination.

Each one, met by bands admiring,  
Showed, to every cat desiring,  
All the latest ways of biting  
And of skinning foes when fighting,  
How to maim a tom retiring.

When hare-banquets they attended,  
And formalities were ended,  
Each guest booked an anxious vic-  
tim,  
Told him what he'd do, and kicked  
him  
To a junket—tail appended.

Fighting now is their epistle:  
Just as mule will eat a thistle;  
    Like Mahommedan is taught  
    Underlie car-juggernaut;  
Like night-hawk will dive at missile.

Were not orators and writers  
And some good and honest fighters  
    In the crucible of action  
    Forged from mere stupefaction  
To stand out as Wrong's indicators?

Then while tiger souls are strong  
Let the brimstone flash along:  
    Better it should scorch the hair  
    Of an arbitrator there  
Than the fighting race begone.

Let cats have their holiday  
Every twenty-third of May:  
It will bring odd breeds together  
Which will toughen up their leather  
Ribbioned pet and lonely stray.

## CANTO VI.

Proudly rides and dives the loon ;  
Courtly breast forgot is soon ;  
    And tranquil waters grow not dis-  
    traught,  
    Just ripple like amusing thought  
When up bobs the lord of June.

Helpless, alike, is human wrath  
To leave its mark as aftermath  
    On fighting cats' enthusiasm,  
    As, provoked to nightly spasm,  
It rears tempest with a lath.

Cranks in general, and dyspeptic,  
Why a fit take epileptic  
    When cats beneath your window—  
    Not meaning innuendo—  
Prove they are facts to skeptic?

You must know that they enjoy it  
Or they never would employ it  
    With its flow of blood suffusive,  
    As reward for joy elusive—  
Splintered boot-jacks to alloy it.

Ah! have you a foolish notion  
That by crossing the broad ocean  
    You will miss the nightly fracas  
    That to vengeance doth awake us?  
Then just listen, friend Boeotion:

You will find Kilkenny cats,  
Bored by winning common spats,  
    Hanging by their knotted tails  
    On a clothesline, teeth and nails  
Mixing praise with caveats.

Only two were in the Ark;  
Yet, at the charge to disembark—  
    Every commentator notes  
    That—from throwing off their  
        coats,  
They were naked—naked stark.

They'll be fighting at the tomb  
Of great Caesar, leaving room  
    For the passage of the ghost,  
    As it stalks to shine or roast  
At the rousing crack of Doom.

A trusty brick may leave you free  
For a whole night from their thren-  
ody;

But you'll snore your wife insane  
With that whistle for refrain,  
Then no better off will be.

You who jump, and spurn the stair,  
Leaving pajamas for repair.

Just to open wide the door  
And, where cat-fight was before,  
At disgusting silence glare;

Then, humiliated, turn  
Swearing by the shins that burn  
That you straight will get a gun,  
Blast each cat you can outrun,  
Rake the fleeter ones astern;

And, when just asleep once more,  
Hove aloft by fiendish roar,  
    You succumb to helpless rage  
    A bed-slat to disengage  
And sit by the open door,

Would you not enjoy more sleep  
If a terrier you would keep  
    Which, at ten, or two, or seven,  
    Sees no difference under heaven,  
Long as cats are in a heap.

Kittens have no sweet school-  
    teachers;  
They are set upon by preachers  
    In the middle of the night—  
    Not with moral, hymn and rite—  
Holy anger wries their features.

So they ought to be forgiven  
When, by love of trouble driven,  
They take frequent satisfaction  
Amplifying one exaction  
In the struggle for cat-heaven.

There is order in creation,  
And who'll say this visitation  
May not temper by its beat  
Joy of sleep that's over sweet  
From good health—or wife's oration?

Just as humming bird an hour  
Every day appoints to flower,  
When his music driven bill  
Honey burden will distill  
In dewy bell and bower.