

THE MARCH MAGAZINES.

"HARPER'S." T. B. Peterson & Bros. send us Harper's Monthly for March, which has the following list of articles:—

"Pussy," Prof. Schele de Vere, with ten illustrations; "Frederick the Great," iv. The Marriage of the Crown Prince, with five illustrations; "Shadows," Alice Cary; "Nature's Common Carrier," Lyman Abbott, with sixteen illustrations; "Brother Music," "South Coast Saunterings in England" (Isle of Wight, part ii), Moncure D. Conway, with twelve illustrations; "A New Judgment of Paris," Justin McCarthy; "Civil Service Reform," A. Macdonough; "Miss Ellington's Niece," Annie Thomas; "A Brave Lady," by the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," with two illustrations; "Our Relations with England," Colonel Adam Haden; "Jessie," Rosamond Dale Owen; "Bolivar, Liberator of South America," Eugene Lawrence; "On a Photograph of Athens," H. T. Tuckerman; "Editor's Easy Chair," "Editor's Literary Record," "Editor's Scientific Record," "Editor's Historical Record," "Editor's Drawer."

From the article entitled "Pussy," by Professor Schele de Vere, we quote the following paragraphs:—

"It is, perhaps, due to the prominent position in which cats appear in Northern mythology that they were subsequently considered as the favorite companions of evil-doers. The Germans portrayed their beautiful goddess Frouwa, whose smiles charmed through her overflowing tears, as drawn by white cats in her airy car. When these deities were subsequently excommunicated by zealous Christian priests, all such companions and pets fell into bad repute. Pussy seems to have suffered in this respect more than other animals; she became, as it were, the Devil's own, and St. Dominick never preached of the Evil One without pointing out the form of a cat. It must be confessed that her thoughtful quietness, as if brooding over some deep scheme, her wicked green eyes, with their fiery sheen by night, her tendency to give out sparks when her fur is rubbed, and her cruel temper, all combined to impress ignorant and credulous people with a sense of fear and horror; so they tormented and persecuted her, and on St. John's Day, the day of witches, when popular belief had it that they all left town and village to accompany their fearful mistresses to the great witches' Sabbath, they burned a goodly number for their delight. Such was the custom in France for many a generation, while in England they were wont to throw them from church-steeple and tower. History tells us how Louis XIII, when a child, once begged of his father the lives of all that were to be thrown into the fire; but no chronicler reports whether the nine lives providentially granted to cats ever saved them from cruel martyrdom. In the town of Ypres, at all events, this does not seem to have been the case, for through the barbarous custom continued till the year 1818! Since victims have gone out of fashion, cats have somewhat recovered their good reputation; perhaps this is to be ascribed to the fact that the French have given Pussy as a pet to the patron saint of lawyers, St. Yves, although Rabelais already interprets the association as by no means peculiarly creditable to the bar.

The clever French missionary Huc, who, with his companion Cabetti, first gave the intelligent account of life in the interior of the Flower Kingdom, was not a little surprised, and quite incredulous at first, when his Chinese friends told him that cats were their watches, and enabled them to tell, with unerring accuracy, the hour of the day. He learned, however, by careful observation, that this was really so; for he noticed that the pupil of every cat he saw, though wide open in the early morning, would gradually contract as the sun rose; at noon a perpendicular line of extreme delicacy would be all that was left to be seen, and then the pupil would dilate again, to return to its natural size by sunset. And when poor Pussy had served her time as a dial, she is served up herself—not in disguise, as in French restaurants, but boldly and honestly. In a lowly house in town, and in almost every farmhouse in the country, a number of cats are seen fastened to chains for the purpose of fattening them; and in the market-houses they hang in low rows, exhibiting their snowy whiteness, and with heads and tails carefully left untouched, to testify to their genuineness. Hence the fondness of the Chinese to introduce them in their illustrations of happy indoor life; while their strange neighbors, the Japanese, show here also their superiority, being fond of caricaturing the poor creatures, and making fun of them after their own manner.

After the days of persecution were over in Europe, cats ceased to appear in history, except on sorrowful occasions, when they were used to amuse men, and to exhibit man's incredible meanness. Thus, we are told by grave historians that Philip II of Spain laughed heartily only once in his life. It was when, in the year 1549, he made his solemn entry into Brussels. Among other ingenious contrivances to amuse him, he was met by a wagon on which a bear stood before what seemed to be a large organ; but in reality it was a box containing twenty cats, whose tails were tied up to meet the keys of the instrument. When the bear was stirred up he would smite the keys, the keys would pull the tails, and the poor cats would cry piteously, while monkeys danced merrily to the sad, miserable music. And the king laughed! The same savage cruelty has been repeatedly shown to poor Pussy, and even this century has witnessed a similar cat concert, which was given in London.

Pussy finds ample compensation, it is to be hoped, in the almost universal tenderness and affection with which she is treated by women, and the fondness with which she has even inspired the greatest of men. Who does not know Tasso's charming sonnet to his cat?—one of the brightest among his smaller gems; and Petrarch is said to have loved his cat only less than his Laura; so that what he could do for the latter he did for his pet—he had her embalmed and kept her as long as he lived. Cardinal Wolsey never sat on his almost regal throne, when he officiated as Chancellor, without having one or two of his favorite cats by his side; and Richelieu's grim humor required the constant presence of a number of kittens, whose merry gambols alone could elicit a smile and soothe his temper. Chateaubriand was so passionately fond of cats that the Pope, to whom he went as ambassador, could not find a more suitable and acceptable present for the devout son of the Church than his predecessor's favorite cat; and when the great author was growing old he fancied he was also growing like his pet, from his close intimacy and great fondness. Nor have other authors declined to sing the praise of Pussy; Canning, and Gray, and Cowper have left their tribute to their affectionate friends;

Hoffmann introduced them into all his quaint and fantastic tales, of which "Kater Murr" is not the least attractive; Edgar Poe bore cheerful witness to their grace and strange attractions; and Victor Hugo rarely is seen without his magnificent Angora. Books on cats abound in almost every language, and only quite recently a French writer of some distinction, Champfleury—has published quite a superb work on the subject, from which we derive some of the illustrations on these pages.

A writer in Chambers' Journal not long ago gave a happy explanation of the mysterious term "caterwauling." Suppose, he says, you very much desired to visit a friend, a female friend, a lovely creature to whom you were paying your addresses; only an immense wall—which you could not blow down like the Clerkenwell wall, because you had not the Fenian carelessness of results—intervened between you and the beloved object. Well, that is exactly the case with these poor maligned pussies. "Come over the wall" (fence for wall, just as it is Scotch for worse), "the wall, the wall," cries the imprisoned puss, "Why don't you come over the wall?" "Spikes, spikes, spikes," cries Tom, explaining the nature of the obstruction, whereas we call it "awailing."

We may add that when the obstacle is happily overcome, and Tom and Pussy meet at last at their favorite trysting-place, the lover begins to adore his beloved in such strains of energetic, irrepresible love that his voice is apt to rise above the subdued tone of a well-bred gentleman, and there is not yet an end to what we contemptuously call caterwauling. Be it modest, be it fear, the two lovers remain at some distance from each other, watching every gesture, every turn of the tail, and looking at each other with the greenest eyes. At last they lift up their voices and sing a duo which lasts for hours.

After they have told each other all they must know before entering upon wedlock, they crawl and creep most cautiously towards each other; but no sooner does Tom come near his flame than she runs and races and skips and vaults to excite the envy of the best of gymnasts. He follows, and being the stronger and swifter, overtakes her soon; but, alas! his reward is nothing but blows and fierce scratches, and thus they keep up the dangerous and yet delightful game of hide and seek. When poor Tom comes home his nose is bleeding, his eyes are torn, his fur dishevelled, and his whole aspect is piteous in the extreme. But such is man! He is happy in spite of his ill treatment, and the fierce coquette is perfectly sure she will see him return ere long to receive his reward.

But we must not judge hastily, and fancy that caterwauling is poor Pussy's only vocal performance. So far from it, cat's voices are very peculiar, and so unusually flexible that many notes approach the tones of the human voice—mysterious sounds which made the cat an object of superstitious veneration in olden times.

From the article on "Our Civil Service," by A. R. Macdonough, we make this extract:—

One hundred millions of dollars, one-fourth the revenue to be raised by our tax and tariff laws, vanishes before it reaches the Treasury. One-fourth of the impost laid for the support of Government upon the labor of the working classes and the ability and capital of those who do not live by wages goes to maintain idlers and cheats in the public offices. One-fourth the price paid by toil for its protection by law feeds the worthless lives of those who creep into place to corrupt or break law. It has come to this, that the Government founded for the greatest good of the greatest number manages its pecuniary affairs for the benefit of the worst few at the cost of the many. In the customs department, it is estimated by the highest authority that from negligence and connivance, which defects in the law assist, the Government does not receive more than one-half the duties it is entitled to. At the port of New York alone there is a yearly loss to the revenue of over thirty millions. The tax on spirits falls by tens of millions to yield its due fruit. The journals teem with accounts of frauds and defalcations in the public service, in which the most successful rascals seem to swoop at less than a fortune. These operations vary in their methods; being conducted sometimes with the secrecy of collusion, and sometimes with the boldness of defiance. The scent of such corruption attracts from afar clouds of obscene birds who settle upon our coasts as fraudulent importers, thrive by the aid of venal accomplices, and return home with their spoil to defame republican institutions. The gibbet, that melancholy sign of civilization which greeted the voyager to a strange shore, should rise beside our light houses to punish that combined breach of hospitality and honesty committed by these Hessians of trade. Other plunderers along our extended frontier, uniting skill with daring, elude the payment of duties by smuggling, to the ruin of honorable merchants as well as to the injury of the Government. Still more outrageously, illicit distillers, trusting the supineness and disdaining the safe purchase of official friends, intrude themselves in the heart of cities, and wage a little war against the troops sent to dislodge them. And others still, boldly steaming into the large ports, buy or watch the opportunity of landing parts of their cargoes in fraud, and pay from the plunder for the desperate services rendered in some cases by their villainous tools in maintaining and murdering the faithful officials set to watch them. No wonder that, with decency discouraged by such associations, and honesty deterred by such dangers, the civil service makes steadily into deeper drift. No wonder, when Congress rejects an enlightened plan for its reform, that on the very day that plan was defeated, a fraud by a Treasury clerk should have been detected to an amount that would have paid for the expense of establishing it. Thus, instead of creating schools for training young men in the various branches of the civil service, as other governments have done, we convert our public offices into seminaries where every art of fraud is taught, and pay our pupils for learning to cheat us more shrewdly. The United States indeed "built worse than they knew" in erecting on the island of Manhattan that stately pile which invites tenants worthy of the edifices of Blackwell's, shelters inmates whom the hospital and the bridewell would welcome home, and promotes its candidates from the pot-house through public service to the penitentiary. Pity that so few exchange official pay for the more wholesome bread and broth of Sing Sing.

Yet this dilapidation of our finances, and the consequent strain upon our resources, grave as these mischiefs are, do not complete the view of the serious evils inflicted by the wretched condition of our civil service. These conspicuous samples of negligence permitted and wrong tolerated by the supreme power deprave general morality, and loosen the strictness of integrity in private affairs. It is a grievous evil that dishonest officials tempt and taint their associates; it is a fearful dan-

ger that every four years new hordes of unprincipled men, despising work, are cast out from the public offices to get their living at the expense of the community; but this influence is far less subtle and corrupting than is the idea thus implanted in the public mind that the State does not need or care for virtue in its civil servants. What squeamishness to complain of individual breaches of trust, of legislative bribery, of venality in the courts, of universal faithlessness in work, when the State itself founds a perpetual lottery of license, and distributes its quadrennial prizes among the most cunning and rapacious!

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Extra letter size (ungummed on flap, for circulars), 3 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, of the same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 6. Extra letter size, 3 1/4 by 6 1/4 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 7. Official size, 3 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. No. 8. Extra official size, 4 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, of same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each. NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS. 6 1/2 by 9 1/2 inches, of buff or manilla paper. All the above envelopes and wrappers to be furnished with postage stamps of such denomination, styles, and colors, and to bear such printing on the flap and to be in such proportion of each, of paper of approved quality, manufactured especially for the purpose, with such water marks or other devices to prevent imitation as the Postmaster-General may direct. The envelopes to be thoroughly and perfectly gummed, the gumming on the flap of each (except circulars) to be in the most thorough manner, in width the entire length. The wrappers to be gummed not less than three-fourths of an inch in width on each side. All envelopes and wrappers must be banded in parcels of twenty-five, and packed in strong pasteboard or straw boxes, each to contain not less than two hundred and fifty sheets of letter size, and one hundred each of the official or extra official size, separately. The newspapers to be packed in boxes of not less than two hundred and fifty sheets. The boxes are to be wrapped and sealed, or securely fastened in strong manilla paper, so as to safely bear transportation by mail to the postmasters. When two thousand or more envelopes are required to fill the order of a postmaster, when less than five thousand are required, proper labels of direction, to be furnished by an agent of the Department, must be placed upon each package by the contractor. Wooden cases containing envelopes to be packed in boxes, and secured by water routes, must be provided with suitable water-proofing. The whole to be done under the inspection and direction of an agent of the Department. The envelopes and wrappers must be furnished and delivered with all reasonable despatch, complete in all respects, ready for use, and such quantity as may be required to fill the daily orders of postmasters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post Office Department, or at the office of the Postmaster-General, or at the office of an agent duly authorized to inspect and receive the same; the place of delivery to be at the option of the Postmaster-General, and the cost of transportation to be borne by the contractor. Dressing, labeling, and water-proofing, to be paid by the contractor. Bidders are notified that the Department will require, as a condition of the contract, that the envelopes and wrappers shall be manufactured and stored in such manner as to ensure security against fire, and that the contractor shall be liable at all times subject to the inspection of an agent of the Department, who will require the stipulations of the contract to be fully complied with. The dies for embossing the postage stamps on the envelopes and wrappers are to be executed to the satisfaction of the Postmaster-General, in the best style, and they are to be provided, constructed, and kept in order at the expense of the contractor. The contractor reserves the right of requiring new dies for any stamps not in use, or for any change of design, and any changes of dies or colors shall be made without extra charge. Specimens of stamped envelopes and wrappers now in use may be seen at any of the principal Post Offices, but these specimens are not to be regarded as the style and quality fixed by the department. The contractor is to provide, furnish, and use are therefore invited to submit samples of other and different qualities and styles, including the character proposed to be used, and to be approved by the Postmaster-General, and make their bids accordingly. The contract will be awarded to the bidder whose proposal, although it be not the lowest, is considered most advantageous to the Department, taking into account the price, quality of the same, workmanship, and the ability of the contractor to manufacture and deliver the envelopes and wrappers in accordance with the terms of this advertisement; and no proposal will be considered unless accompanied by a sufficient and satisfactory guarantee. The Postmaster-General also reserves the right to reject any and all bids, and in his judgment the interests of the Government require it. Before closing a contract the successful bidder may be required to prepare notes, and submit impressions thereof. The use of any of the above MAY OR MAY NOT BE CONTINUED. Bonds, with approved and sufficient sureties, in the sum of \$5000.00, to be required for the performance of the contract, as required by the seventeenth section of the act of Congress, approved the 26th of August, 1846, and payment of such bonds contract will be made quarterly, after proper adjustment of accounts. The Postmaster-General reserves to himself the right to annul the contract whenever he shall see any part thereof, is offered for sale for the purpose of speculation; and under no circumstances will a contractor of the contract be allowed to manufacture or to any party who shall be, in the opinion of the Postmaster-General, less able to fulfill the conditions thereof than the original contractor. The right is also reserved to annul the contract in case of failure to perform faithfully any of its stipulations. The number of envelopes of different sizes, and of wrappers issued by the Postmaster-General during a fiscal year ended June 30, 1869, was as follows, viz.:— No. 1. Note size, 3 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches, (not heretofore used), 4,150,000. No. 2. Full letter size, 3 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches, 67,500,000. No. 3. Extra letter size, 3 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches, 348,000. No. 4. Full letter size, 3 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, 4,504,500. No. 5. Official size, 3 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, 604,500. No. 6. Extra official size, 4 1/4 by 5 1/4 inches, 1700. Wrappers, 3,956,500. Bids should be submitted in envelopes sealed and marked "Proposals for Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers," and addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, Post Office Department, Washington, D. C. JOHN A. J. CRISWELL, Postmaster-General. 111 eod1m1

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