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THE KITTEN.

WANTON droll, whose harmless play
Beguiles the rustic's closing day,
When, drawn the evening fire about,
Sit aged crone and thoughtless lout,
And child upon his three-foot stool,
Waiting till his supper cool,
And maid, whose cheek outblooms the rose,
As bright the blazing faggot glows,
Who, bending to the friendly light,
Plies her task with busy slight ;
Come, shew thy tricks and sportive graces,
Thus circled round with merry faces.

Backward coiled and crouching low,
With glaring eyeballs watch thy foe,

The housewife's spindle whirling round,
Or thread or straw that on the ground
Its shadow throws, by urchin sly
Held out to lure thy roving eye;
Then stealing onward, fiercely spring

Upon the tempting faithless thing.

Now, wheeling round with bootless skill,
Thy bo-peep tail provokes thee still,
As still beyond thy curving side
Its jetty tip is seen to glide ;
Till from thy centre starting far,
Thou sidelong veer'st with rump in air
Erected stiff, and gait awry,
Like madam in her tantrums high ;
Though ne'er a madam of them all,

Whose silken kirtle sweeps the hall,
More varied trick and whim displays
To catch the admiring stranger's gaze.

outbloom the rose,

Forgot glows,

Kindly light,

slight ;

and sportive graces,

merry faces.

Doth power in measured verses dwell,
All thy vagaries wild to tell ?

Ah no!—the start, the jet, the bound,
The giddy scamper round and round,
With leap and toss and high curvet,
And many a whirling somerset,
(Permitted by the modern muse
Expression technical to use)
These mock the deftest rhymester's skill,
But poor in art though rich in will.

The featest tumbler, stage bedight,
To thee is but a clumsy wight,
Who every limb and sinew strains
To do what costs thee little pains;
For which, I trow, the gaping crowd
Requite him oft with plaudits loud.

But, stopped the while thy wanton play,
Applauses too thy pains repay:
For then, beneath some urchin's hand
With modest pride thou takest thy stand,
While many a stroke of kindness glides
Along thy back and tabby sides.

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THE KITTEN.

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Dilated swells thy glossy fur,
And loudly croons thy busy pur,
As, timing well the equal sound,
Thy clutching feet bepat the ground,
And all their harmless claws disclose
Like prickles of an early rose,
While softly from thy whiskered cheek
Thy half-closed eyes peer, mild and meek.

ight,

But not alone by cottage fire
Do rustics rude thy feats admire.
The learned sage, whose thoughts explore
The widest range of human lore,
Or with unfettered fancy fly
Through airy heights of poesy,
Pausing smiles with altered air
To see thee climb his elbow-chair,
Or, struggling on the mat below,
Hold warfare with his slipped toe.
The widowed dame or lonely maid,
Who, in the still but cheerless shade

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Of home unsocial, spends her age
And rarely turns a lettered page,
Upon her hearth for thee lets fall
The rounded cork or paper ball,
Nor chides thee on thy wicked watch,
The ends of ravelled skein to catch,
But lets thee have thy wayward will,
Perplexing oft her better skill.

Even he, whose mind of gloomy bent,
In lonely tower or prison pent,
Reviews the coil of former days,
And loathes the world and all its ways,
What time the lamp's unsteady gleam
Hath roused him from his moody dream,
Feels, as thou gambol'st round his seat,
His heart of pride less fiercely beat,
And smiles, a link in thee to find,
That joins it still to living kind.

Whence hast thou then, thou witless puss !
The magic power to charm us thus ?

Is it that in thy glaring eye
And rapid movements, we descrie—
Whilst we at ease, secure from ill,
The chimney corner snugly fill—
A lion darting on his prey,
A tiger at his ruthless play ?
Or is it that in thee we trace
With all thy varied wanton grace,
An emblem, viewed with kindred eye,
Of tricky, restless infancy ?
Ah ! many a lightly sportive child,
Who hath like thee our wits beguiled,
To dull and sober manhood grown,
With strange recoil our hearts disown.

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And so, poor kit ! must thou endure,
When thou becomest a cat demure,
Full many a cuff and angry word,
Chased roughly from the tempting board.
But yet, for that thou hast, I ween,
So oft our favoured play-mate been,
thou witless puss !
us thus ?

Soft be the change which thou shalt prove !
When time hath spoiled thee of our love,
Still be thou deemed by housewife fat
A comely, careful, mousing cat,
Whose dish is, for the public good,
Replenished oft with savoury food.
Nor, when thy span of life is past,
Be thou to pond or dung-hill cast,
But, gently borne on goodman's spade,
Beneath the decent sod be laid ;
And children shew with glistening eyes
The place where poor old pussy lies.

SCHOOL 1

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