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Puss in Boots. 1856

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PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

PUSS IN BOOTS

BY

OTTO SPECKTER.

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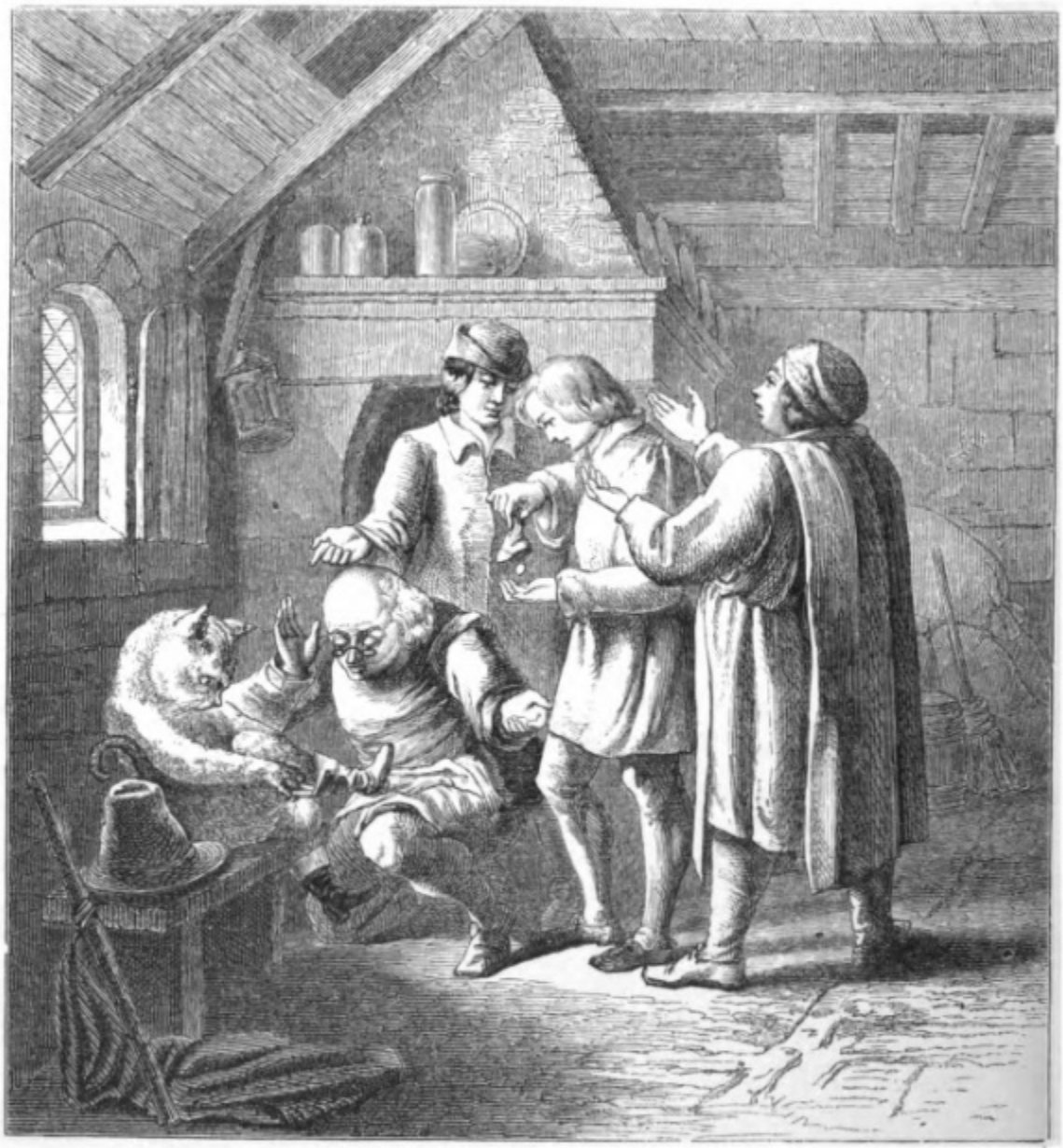

PLATE IV—THE BOOTS TRIED ON—A CAPITAL FIT

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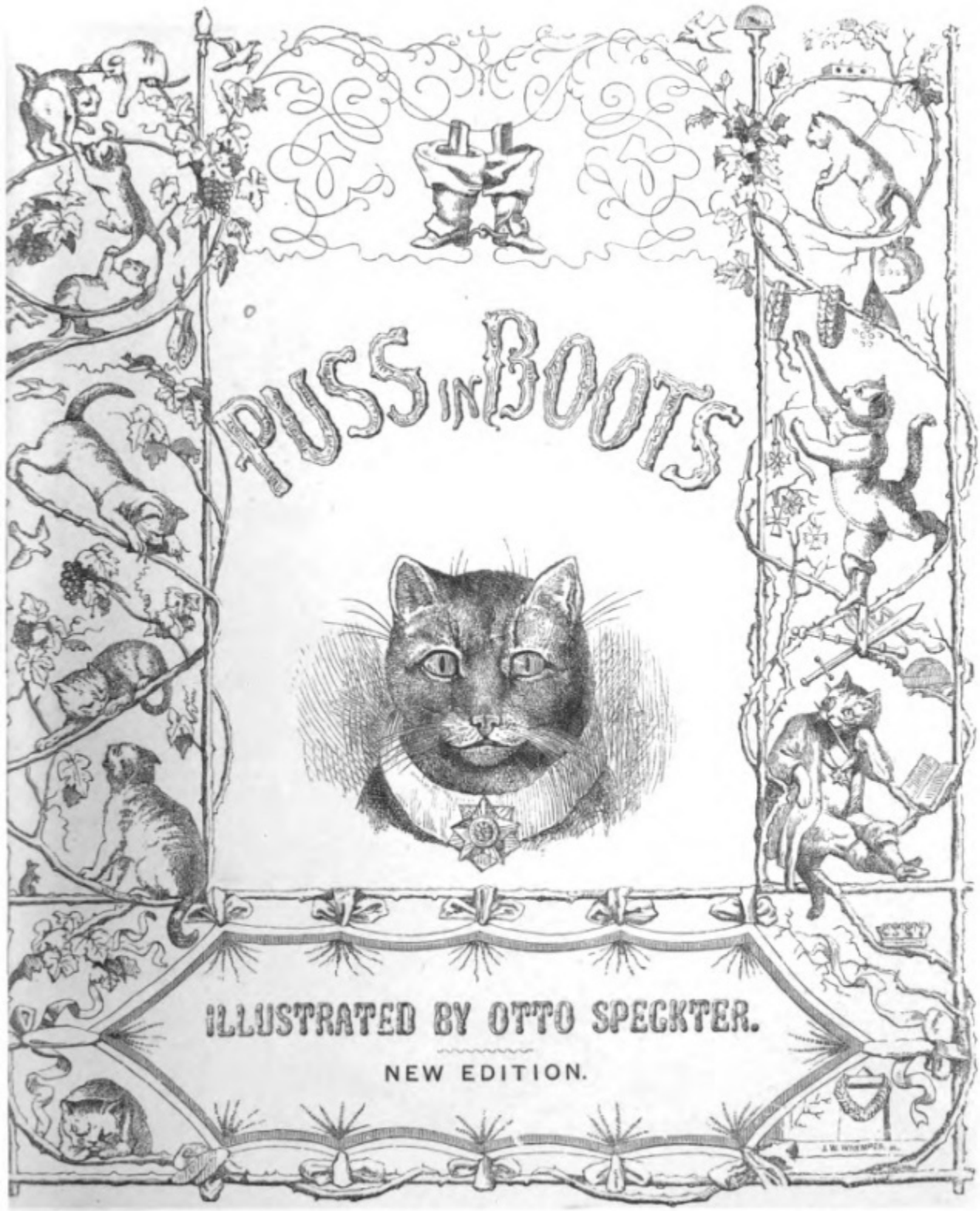

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LIST OF PLATES.

PLATE		PAGE
I.	THE CAT'S CAREER	*Title-page.*
II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
III.	MEASURE TAKEN FOR THE BOOTS	4
IV.	THE BOOTS TRIED ON—A CAPITAL FIT	6
V.	PUSS AND THE PARTRIDGES	8
VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT.

ON the death of an aged miller, his three sons proceeded to divide the inheritance among them. The eldest son took the mill, the second the ass, and for the third there remained nothing but the big grey Cat. You see here the eldest brother standing outside grinding his corn, and talking to the second brother, who is mounted on the ass; while the youngest brother is sitting in-doors sorrowfully eating his breakfast, his Cat having gone to sleep on the bench beside him. Theophilus (for that was the name of the youngest brother), said to himself, "My lot is indeed most miserable; what in the world

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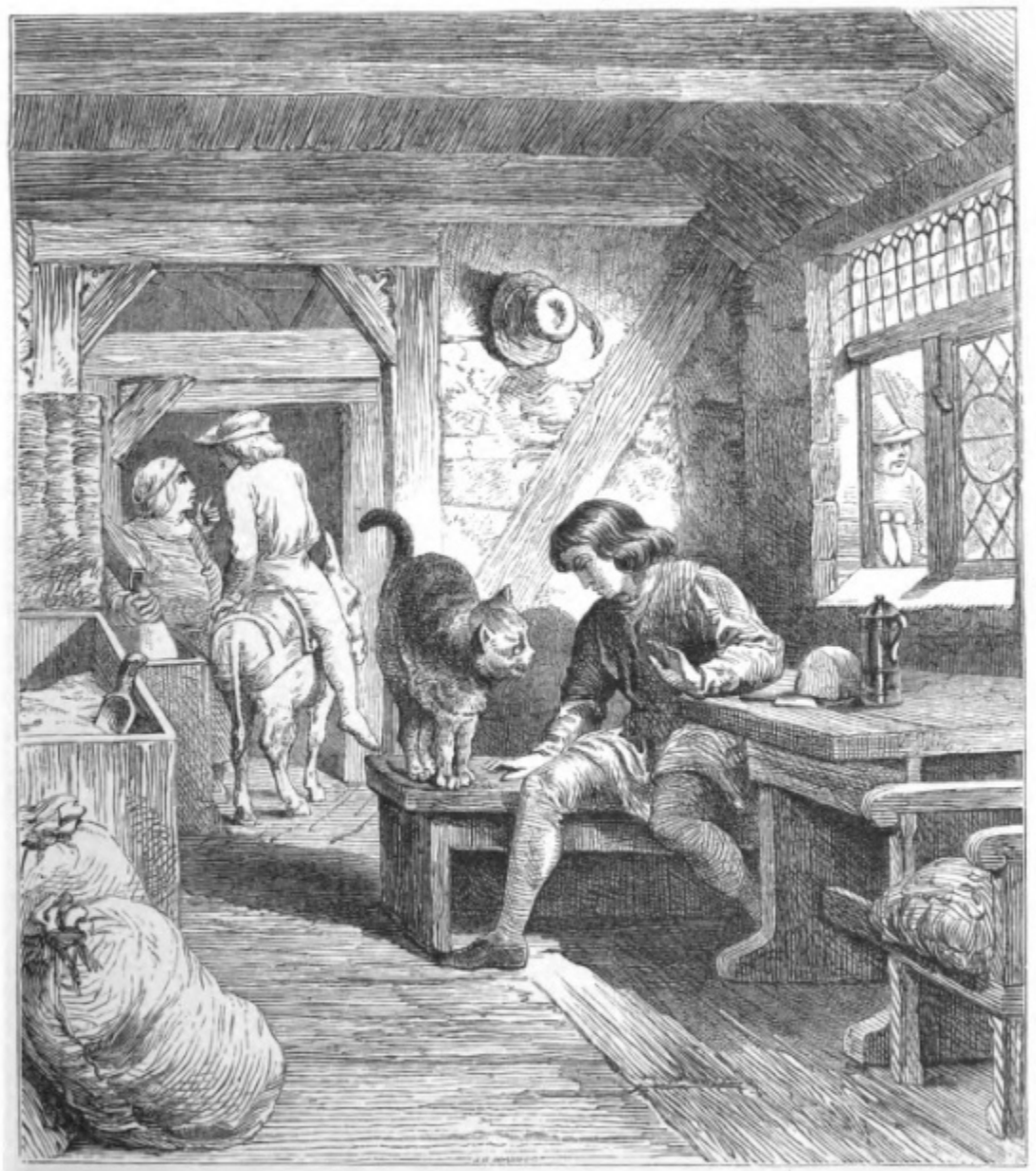

PLATE II—THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT

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am I to do with my Cat? If I make a pair of gloves out of his skin, there's an end of him; nothing more is to be got from him." The Cat, who understood all that he said, hereupon arose, set up his back, and said, "Listen, dear Theophilus: you need not kill me in order to make a pair of worthless gloves out of my skin; only order a pair of boots to be made for me, so that I may be able to go about, and may be fit to be seen by the folks, and your fortune shall soon be made." The miller's son was astonished to hear the Cat speak; but, as the shoemaker happened to pass by at the moment, he called him in.

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PLATE III.

MEASURE TAKEN FOR THE BOOTS.

PUSS jumped upon the great arm-chair. Theophilus explained to the shoemaker that he was required to take his young friend's measure for a pair of boots. The man, although a little astonished, was very glad to get a fresh job; he concealed the slight alarm which he felt; and even when Puss leaned one paw upon his head, he only requested the young gentleman to draw in his claws a little. In taking the measure, the shoemaker stroked Puss's leg, which set him purring with pleasure, and he addressed his master, "Good Theophilus, I love you; you never stroked me the wrong way; you let me sleep quietly

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PLATE III—MEASURE TAKEN FOR THE BOOTS

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in the sun; and when your brothers wanted to tease me, and carried me into the dark, in order to see what they called electrical sparks from my back, you always opposed it: I will now show my gratitude for all this. You must not, however, look on me as faithless, as other men do; for, in truth, I am not so! The race of cats, it is true, has got a bad name, because we do not choose, like the dog, tamely to put up with all that men do to us. We hate slavery, and preserve our independence; and, opposed to all oppression, we do not show forth our talents at command. For this reason, you have remained ignorant hitherto of my power of speaking: you have many other things yet to learn about me. I make only one condition—that you put unlimited confidence in me." Theophilus, touched by the nobleness of sentiment displayed by his Cat, shook his paw, and promised to confide implicitly in him.

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PLATE IV.

THE BOOTS TRIED ON—A CAPITAL FIT.

A FEW days after, the shoemaker brought the boots. Puss tried them on with great satisfaction, and here you see the shoemaker putting on his spectacles to admire their excellent fit; at the same time that he holds out his hand to receive the money for them. Theophilus, in consternation, shakes the last shilling out of his empty purse, to pay for them. His two brothers enjoyed a hearty laugh at his simplicity in having ordered boots to be made for a cat; and the eldest in particular, as is the usual practice of elder brothers, rated him soundly for his stupidity in throwing away his last penny upon

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a Cat, who would soon take to his heels, without scruple, and carry off the boots with him. Puss pretended not to hear this; nevertheless, he thought to himself, "You have cheated poor Theophilus: I will not behave so badly to him as you have done; I know very well what I am about." So saying, he flung a sack over his shoulder, took a stick in his paw, and, walking on his hind legs like a man, went out of the door.

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PLATE V.

PUSS AND THE PARTRIDGES.

PUSS happened to know that the king of the country had fallen into a fit of melancholy, because he could not procure his favourite dish—partridges; not that there was any lack of them in the fields, but they had become so shy that no sportsmen could get hold of them. Puss went into a corn-field, drew off his boots, in order to approach the birds without noise, spread open his sack to serve as a net, and, fastening a string to the end of it, lay down behind the hedge. He waited a long while in vain; but at last the partridges came, and, attracted by some crumbs within the bag, hopped in one after the other: at that moment Puss drew the string, and, whipping the sack, birds and all, over his shoulder, marched off to the palace. The king chanced at the time to have convoked his Parliament, and was consequently in very bad humour, when a

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PLATE V—PUSS AND THE PARTRIDGES

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lord in waiting announced that a gamekeeper, who looked like a cat, was waiting to offer a present of partridges from his master to the king. His majesty at once dissolved Parliament (you see the members in the background walking off dissatisfied) and ordered in the messenger. Puss made a low bow, and emptied his bag at the king's feet, at the same time turning away his head, lest the sight of the birds should provoke his appetite, and said, "My master, the Marquis of Carabas, begs your majesty's acceptance of some game, which he has just taken." The king's mouth watered at the sight, and, regaining his good humour, he inquired after the marquis, said he must make his personal acquaintance, asked why he never came to court, and, sending for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, desired him to give Puss as much money as he could carry. You here see the Chancellor of the Exchequer with his money-bag pointing to the Cat, professing himself much puzzled to comprehend what business a cat can have with money. On the other side, the Cook hurries in from the kitchen, attracted by the news of the partridges, and loading with commendations the noble donor.

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PLATE VI.

PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN.

THE money which Puss had thus obtained, was of great assistance to his master; for before that, he had suffered a great deal from dependence upon his brothers. Puss went out sporting regularly, and every day brought in such a large bagful of game, that he became quite a favourite with the king, and was permitted to go in and out of the palace, and run about it, just as he chose. Here you see him in the kitchen, standing before the fire warming his paws. The cookmaid is plucking the partridges, and the king's Fool is playing with some of the birds. At this moment the king's coachman enters, calls for a glass of beer, and exclaims with

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PLATE VI—PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN

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an oath, "Plague take the king and the princess! I was just going to the public-house to play at cards, when the carriage was ordered to take them a drive to the lake." As soon as the Cat heard this, he slipped away home, and said to his master, "If you wish to become a prince and a rich man, come along with me to the lake, and bathe in it." The miller's son knew not what answer to make, yet he followed his Cat, rather because he cared not what became of himself, than from any expectation of being made a prince.

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PLATE VII.

PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER.

THEOPHILUS stripped himself stark naked, and jumped into the water; you may observe him under the bush. The Cat meanwhile carried off his clothes and hid them. This was scarcely done when the king drove up. Instantly the Cat began to cry most lamentably, and to wring his paws. No sooner did the king espy his favourite running up and down in such distress, than he stopped his carriage and got out. "What is the matter, gamekeeper?" said he. "Alas! your majesty," answered Puss, "one misfortune after another! My master was bathing, when a thief came and carried off

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PLATE VII—PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER.

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his clothes, and there is the marquis up to his neck in the water at this moment. He can't come out, and if he stops in longer he will catch his death of cold." When the king heard this, he ordered one of his people to ride back and fetch a suit of clothes from the royal wardrobe, and showed his approbation of Puss's fidelity by scratching him good-humouredly under the chin. The king's daughter is seen seated in the carriage, curious to catch a glimpse of the Marquis of Carabas. As soon as the servant returned, and the marquis had put on the splendid suit of clothes, the king invited him to take a seat in his carriage, and thanked him for the fine partridges. The princess, for her part, was by no means dissatisfied to have the marquis in the carriage beside her; for he was young and handsome, and had taken her fancy somewhat.

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PLATE VIII.

PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE.

AS the carriage drove on, the Cat always kept ahead of it, like a running footman; and in this fashion they drove across the frontier of the king's dominions into the territory of the wicked Magician. They first passed through a noble forest, where many hundred people were cutting down and sawing the oaks.

"To whom does this forest belong?" inquires the Cat of the woodman.

"To the great Magician."

"Harkye! The king is coming this way, and if he asks whose wood this is, mind you answer that it belongs to the Marquis of Carabas. If you don't, you shall all be burnt alive."

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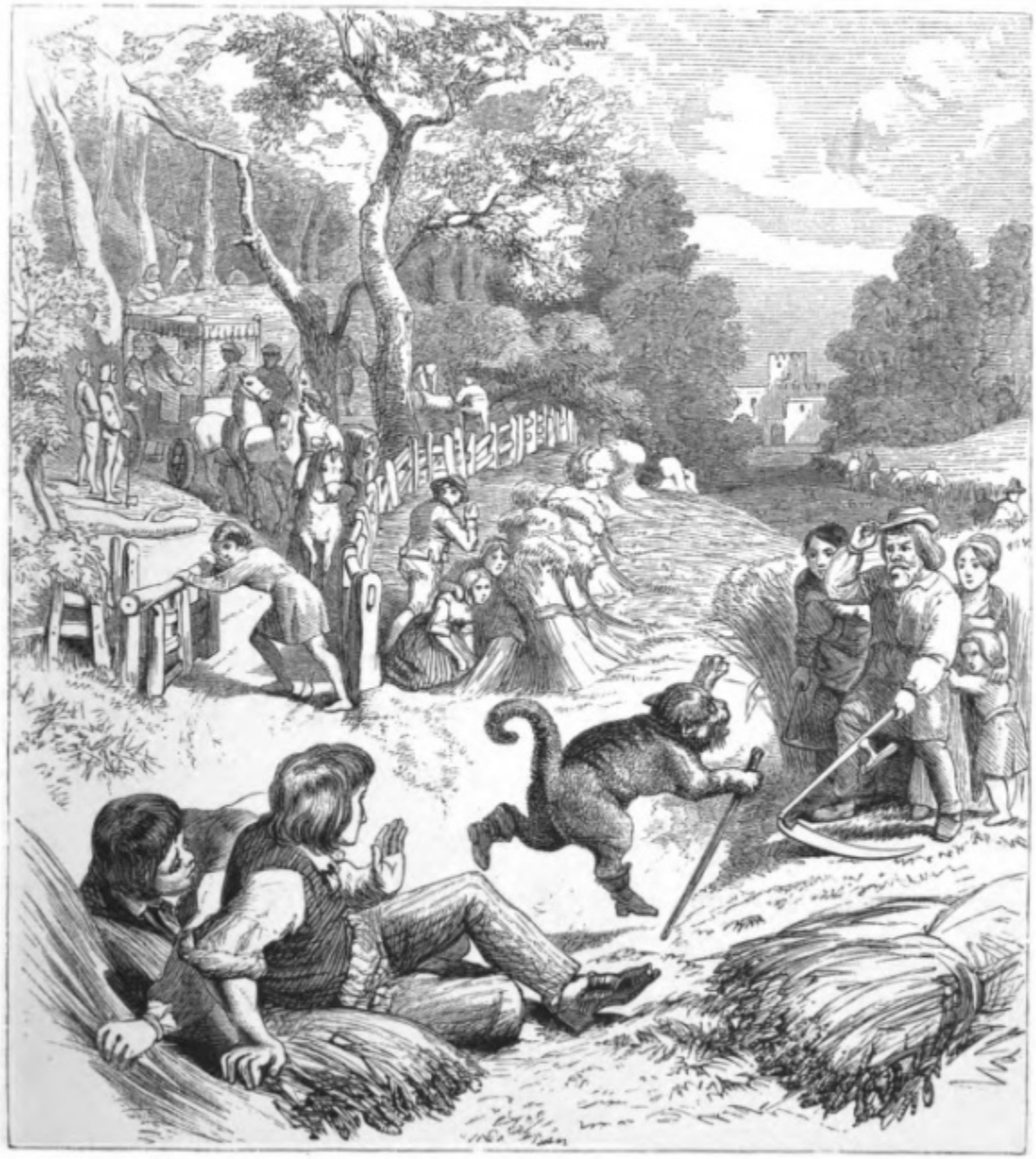

PLATE VIII—PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE

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A little farther, the Cat came to a corn-field filled with reapers.

"Whose corn is that, you people?"

"The Magician's."

"Harkye! The king is coming, and if he asks whose corn it is, you will answer, the Marquis of Carabas's. If you don't, you shall all be killed outright."

The people were terrified at the sight of the little hairy man, who looked so angry, and wore long claws on his hands, and a long furry tail, and high boots to run in. They imagined he must be the Magician himself, who was in the habit of assuming various shapes; and consequently took off their hats to Puss, and did just as he bade them. The Cat ran on farther, and came to a meadow, where he gave the same orders to several hundred haymakers, and was as readily obeyed. Here you see the meadow in front of the castle of the Magician, which appears behind the trees.

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PLATE IX.

PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN.

PUSS ran so far and so fast that he blistered his feet by the time he reached the castle gate. It required all the courage he could muster, to venture into the chamber of the wicked Magician; but the thought that he might be the means of raising his master to the height of a throne presented itself, and he instantly entered, made a very humble obeisance, and said, "I am a man of science on my travels, and take the liberty to introduce myself to your Excellency, in order to make the acquaint-

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PLATE IX—PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN

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ance of one whose fame has extended all over the globe."
The Magician smiled maliciously, but being rather flattered by this compliment from a brother savant, he allowed the Cat to proceed.

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PLATE X.

THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP.

"THEY tell me," continued Puss, "that you have carried science to such a pitch, that you can at pleasure assume the form of any animal you choose. Although I have paid some attention to magic, this does appear to me, I must say, incredible."

"I'll soon give you a proof of it," said the Magician; and instantly stood before him turned into an elephant. The Cat politely requested him to resume his own proper shape, otherwise he should faint with terror; and in a moment the Magician re-appeared, seated, as at first, in his arm-chair.

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PLATE X—THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP

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"There's a trick for you!" said he; "you certainly never saw a more wonderful performance than that." The Cat expressed his astonishment, but hinted that he had once seen an artist who could turn himself into the smallest sized animals, which was certainly even more wonderful, as he could not comprehend what became of the huge human body.

"That is a mere nothing," said the Magician; and at the same instant began leaping about the room in the shape of a mouse. The Cat was after him directly; and, before he could recollect the right word to utter, in order to disenchant himself, the Cat had seized him in his teeth, killed him as dead as a door-nail, and eaten him!

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PLATE XL

THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE.

THE King in his carriage followed the Cat at a short distance, and whenever he inquired who was the proprietor of the forests and fields which he passed, invariably received the same answer from the people on the road,—that all belonged to the Marquis of Carabas. He was perfectly astonished at the immense wealth of the marquis. At last they reached the castle, at the very moment when the Magician had been eaten up, his spell broken, and the charm entirely destroyed. Owls and owlets, crows and bats, were quitting the building, having no longer any business there. The carriage stopped, the king and his attendants got out, and there on the steps stood the Cat, and said, "Gracious

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PLATE XI—THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE

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sovereign, you are welcome at the castle of my master the marquis, who will feel honoured for the rest of his life by this visit." At the same time he politely offered his paw to the princess, and handed her up-stairs. Theophilus as yet did not dare to offer her his arm. He felt quite abashed, and did not know what to make of the events which had occurred. He looked inquiringly towards Puss, as if to ask whether he might really trust his ears, and whether all this really belonged to him. The king clapped him on the back, and said, "Upon my word, marquis, you have got a noble estate; and your castle is almost more splendid than my own palace; and our domains join each other in the most convenient manner." Then, pursuing the same train of thought, he muttered to himself, "What an excellent match for my daughter!" As for the princess, she was a little dissatisfied that the handsome and wealthy marquis persisted in giving her such short answers, and that he paid her so little attention.

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PLATE XII.

THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER.

IT is quite certain, however, that the marquis must soon have abandoned his monosyllables and his bashfulness, otherwise he would not have ventured, in so short a time, to aspire to the hand of the beautiful princess. He did so, and to his great joy his suit was accepted. The marriage took place soon after, the marquis became king, and Puss was made his prime minister. In the last picture you see Theophilus as king, walking in solemn procession with his bride to the Abbey, where the nuptials are to be celebrated. He is surrounded by all the nobles of his kingdom; before him are borne the sceptre, sword, and wax taper, as symbols of his power, his justice, and his wisdom. The cross is carried after him in token of

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PLATE XII—THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER

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his religion; and the Bishops and Clergy follow next. Further in the distance, you perceive the old king, carried along in an arm-chair, because he has grown so fat that he can neither walk nor govern. He is followed by the Army, but owing to the crowd, only the tops of their lances appear in view. Puss, as prime minister, walks beside the young king. He perceives a number of new and old acquaintances in the crowd, and bows to them most condescendingly. Just now he is greeting Theophilus's brothers—together with their donkey—for all of whom he will doubtless secure comfortable places, and offices of honour and profit. Dogs alone must not come in his way. You perceive he has given strict orders to have them kicked out: this was Puss's only failing. He governed the king and the country down to the day of his death, and made them all happy.

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LIST OF PLATES.

PLATE		PAGE
I.	THE CAT'S CAREER	*Title-page.*
II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
III.	MEASURE TAKEN FOR THE BOOTS	4
IV.	THE BOOTS TRIED ON—A CAPITAL FIT	6
V.	PUSS AND THE PARTRIDGES	8
VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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LIST OF PLATES.

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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
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X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LIST OF PLATES.

PLATE		PAGE
I.	THE CAT'S CAREER	*Title-page.*
II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
III.	MEASURE TAKEN FOR THE BOOTS	4
IV.	THE BOOTS TRIED ON—A CAPITAL FIT	6
V.	PUSS AND THE PARTRIDGES	8
VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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LIST OF PLATES.

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I.	THE CAT'S CAREER	*Title-page.*
II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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LIST OF PLATES.

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I.	THE CAT'S CAREER	*Title-page.*
II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
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VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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LIST OF PLATES.

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II.	THE MILLER'S YOUNGEST SON AND HIS CAT	2
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VI.	PUSS IN THE ROYAL KITCHEN	10
VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
XI.	THE MARQUIS TAKES POSSESSION OF THE CASTLE	20
XII.	THE MARRIAGE PROCESSION, AND PUSS PRIME MINISTER	22

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VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
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VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
X.	THE MAGICIAN TRANSFORMED AND GOBBLED UP	18
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VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
IX.	PUSS CALLING UPON THE MAGICIAN	16
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VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
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VII.	PUSS IN DISTRESS—THE MARQUIS IN THE WATER	12
VIII.	PUSS RUNNING BEFORE THE ROYAL CARRIAGE	14
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