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THE CAT AND THE VICAR.

If all be true that some relate,
The souls of men do transmigrate
At death, and dwell in bird or beast—
The Pythagorian place of rest.

What wonder, then, if demons can
Possess a bird, a beast, or man,
Or other thing of curious make.
Instance, in Paradise the snake ;
Though some who mount opinion's donkey
Will have the snake an ape or monkey.
Howe'er, my theme will shortly shew
What cats possessed with them can do.

Ye parsons, pardon this digression,
I mean no harm to your profession.
And keep your patience while I state
How keen grimalkin clawed of late
A son of Oxford and the chase,
Who hunted more for hares than grace.

One evening fine the sun shone bright.
And shed o'er all its ruddy light ;
The peasant homeward bent his way.
And gladly left the labouring day ;
As home a jolly priest did ride.

Two greyhounds trotting by his side.
These thoughts his empty pate possest,
As thus he pondered in hiss breast:
 " Ill luck attends my weary way.
And disappointment dulls the day ;
My dogs ill-bred are short of sight.
No game shall grace my board to-night.

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I've lost the course, my honour's gone,
Far nobler dogs the prize have won."
When at that moment, from a cot,
A boy came, who a cat had got ;
The throttled creature fizzed and squalled.
" Holloa! my lad," the parson bawled,
"What, hast thou got the devil there ?"
"Yaw," said the boy, as he drew near ;
"Divvle enough an please ye, mon,
I'm gooint drown her ey this pon'.
He minds na mich for rat or mouse,
But's allis rongein 'bout the house."

 "Come, turn him down," the parson said,
"For I am a kill-devil by trade ;
Here's sixpence for an odd halloo.
Now mind what gallant fun I'll shew."

 Down dropt the cat upon the road,
With heart and voice the parson looded ;
But frightened puss no sooner saw
The greyhounds come with open jaw.
Than spreading wide each horny fang,
Up Nannie's hinder leg she sprang.

 Away! away, all went full smack ;
Tib held him fast on Nannie's back ;
The parson's coat waved in the wind,
And Jack did laugh and shout behind ;
" Oh Lard !" cried he, " here's mountebanks;"
For both the dogs, with limber shanks,
Alternately with wondrous force
Kept vaulting o'er the frightened horse.
Till puss in danger of a wreck,
Sprang clean behind plump Oxford's neck.
And lapping round, her pliant paws
Hooked deeply in his fleshy jaws.

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Now cries of torture rent the air,
Which urged to greater speed the mare.
A carter on the road he met
Cried, " See thee, what's yon fellow get?"
"Oh," said another at his beck,
"He's got the divvle in his neck."
The cat did waul and tore his skin,
Till blood and sweat dropt from his chin.
Nor had he hand or foot to spare.
Employed to stop and guide the mare.
In vain his force and skill were tried,
The devil drives and he must ride.

A pond there was hard by the way
Of stagnant water, mud, and clay :
There mettled Nannie bore away.
In spite of bridle and wo-aye.
And, springing sidelong from the road.
In slough of despond plunged her load ;
There horse and rider, cat and dogs.
Went smash among th' assembled frogs.
Like a hot horse-shoe in the pool,
Boscowen *hissed* and lay to cool,
On beam ends, like a battered wreck ;
Grimalkin on his quarter-deck
Stood like a gallant British tar,
Amid the rage of canine war.
Till rustics came, full many a thrave,
And saved the *hulk* and *tar* a grave.