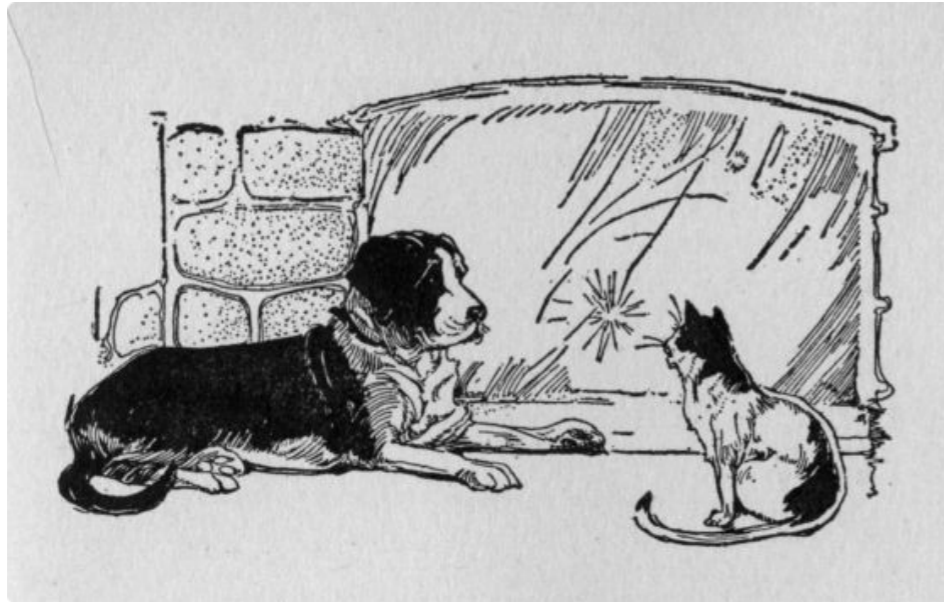


Ririro

Where the sparks go



One night when the wind was blowing and it was clear and cold out of doors, a cat and a dog, who were very good friends, sat dozing before a fire-place. The wood was snapping and crackling, making the sparks fly. Some flew up the chimney, others settled into coals in the bed of the fireplace, while others flew out on the hearth and slowly closed their eyes and went to sleep.

One spark ventured farther out upon the hearth and fell very near the cat. This made her jump, which awakened the dog.

"That almost scorched your fur coat, Miss Cat," said the dog.

"No, indeed," answered the cat. "I am far too quick to be caught by those silly sparks."

"Why do you call them silly?" asked the dog. "I think them very good to look at, and they help to keep us warm."

"Yes, that is all true," said the cat, "but those that fly up the chimney on a night like this certainly are silly, when they could be warm and comfortable inside; for my part, I cannot see why they fly up the chimney."

The spark that flew so near Pussy was still winking, and she blazed up a little when she heard the remark the cat made.

"If you knew our reason you would not call us silly," she said. "You cannot see what we do, but if you were to look up the chimney and see what happens if we are fortunate enough to get out at the top, you would not call us silly."

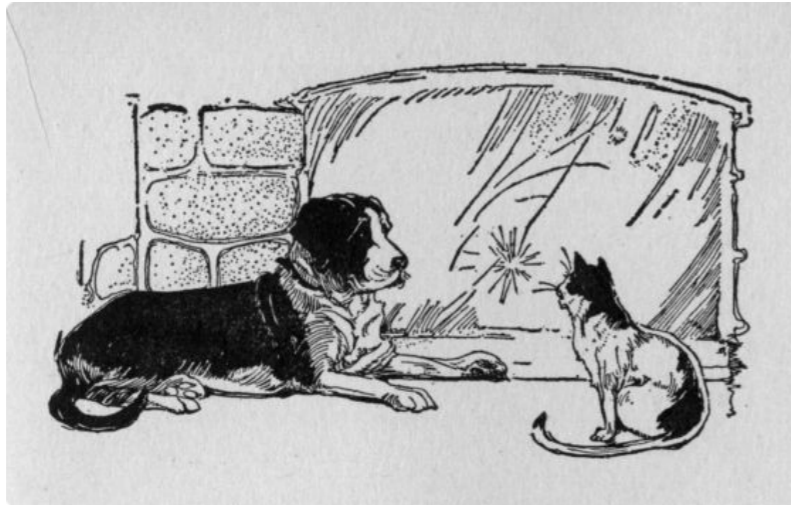
The dog and cat were very curious to know what happened, but the spark told them to look and see for themselves. The cat was very cautious and told the dog to look first, so he stepped boldly up to the fireplace and thrust his head in. He quickly withdrew it, for his hair was singed, which made him cry and run to the other side of the room.

Miss Cat smoothed her soft coat and was very glad she had been so wise; she walked over to the dog and urged him to come nearer the fire, but he realized why a burnt child dreads the fire, and remained at a safe distance.

Cat walked back to the spark and continued to question it. "We cannot go into the fire," she said. "Now, pretty, bright spark, do tell us what becomes of you when you fly up the

chimney. I am sure you only become soot and that cannot make you long to get to the top."

"Oh, you are very wrong," said the spark. "We are far from being black when we fly up the chimney, for once we reach the top, we live forever sparkling in the sky. You can see, if you look up the chimney, all of our brothers and sisters, who have been lucky and reached the top, winking at us almost every night. Sometimes the wind blows them away, I suppose, for there are nights when we cannot see the sparks shine."



"Who told you all that?" said the cat. "Did any of the sparks ever come back and tell you they could live forever?"

"Oh no!" said the spark; "but we can see them, can we not? And, of course, we all want to shine forever."

"I said you were silly," said the cat, "and now I know it; those are not sparks you see; they are stars in the sky."

"You can call them anything you like," replied the spark, "but we make the bright light you see."

"Well, if you take my advice," said the cat, "you will stay right in the fireplace, for once you reach the top of the chimney out of sight you go. The stars you see twinkling are far above the chimney, and you never could reach them." But the spark would not be convinced. Just

then some one opened a door and the draught blew the spark back into the fireplace. In a few minutes it was flying with the others toward the top of the chimney.

Cat watched the fire a minute and then looked at the dog.

"The spark may be right, after all," said the dog. "Let us go out and see if we can see it."

Pussy stretched herself and blinked. "Perhaps it is true," she replied; "anyway, I will go with you and look."