

THE
HISTORY OF
WHITTINGTON
AND
HIS CAT;

How from a poor Country Boy, destitute of
Parents or Relations,

HE ATTAINED GREAT RICHES,

And was promoted to the high and honourable
dignity of

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON.



YORK:

Printed by J. Kendrew, Colliergate.

FRONTISPIECE.



Sir Richard Whittington behold,
In Mayor's Robes and Chain of Gold.

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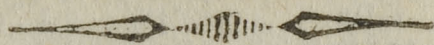
YORK :

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Roman Capital and Small Letters.

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THE
HISTORY OF
WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT.

DICK WHITTINGTON was so very young when his father and mother died, that he neither knew them nor the place of his birth. He strolled about the country, as ragged as a colt, till he met with a waggoner who was going to London, and he gave him leave to walk by the side of his waggon, without paying any thing for



his passage, which obliged little Dick very much, having heard that the streets were paved with gold, he was willing to get a little of it ; but great was his disappointment, when he saw the streets covered with dirt instead of gold, and himself in a strange place, without food, friends, or money. Though the waggoner was so cha-

ritable as to let him walk up by the side of his waggon gratis, he took care not to know him when he came to town, and the poor boy was in a little time so cold and hungry that he wished himself at a good kitchen fire in the country. In this distress he asked charity of several people, and one of them bid him "Go to work, for an idle rogue." That I will, says Whittington, with all my heart, I will work for you, if you will let me. The man, who thought this savoured of impertinence, (though the poor boy only intended to shew his readiness to work) gave him a blow with his stick, which broke his head, so that the blood ran down. In this situation, and fainting for want of food, he laid himself down at the

door of one Mr. Fitzwarren, a merchant, where the cook saw him, and being an ill-natured hussy, ordered him to go about his business, or she would scold him. At this time Mr. Fitzwarren came from the Exchange,



and also began to scold the poor boy, bidding him go to work. Whitting-

ton answered, that he should be glad to work, if any body would employ him, and that he should be able, if he could get some victuals to eat; but that he had got none for three days, and that he was a poor country boy and knew nobody, and none would employ him. He then endeavoured to get up, but was so very weak that he fell down again, which excited so much compassion in the merchant, that he ordered the servants to take him in, and give him some meat and drink, and let him help the cook to do any dirty work that she had to set him about. Whittington would have lived happily in this worthy family, had he not been bumped about by the cross cook, who must always be roasting or basting, and



when the spit was still, she employed her hands upon poor Whittington ; till Miss Alice his master's daughter, was informed of it, and then she took compassion on the poor boy, and made the cook treat him kindly.

Besides the crossness of the cook, Whittington had another difficulty to get over before he could be happy.

He had by order of his master a flock bed placed for him in the garret, but it was so overrun with rats and mice, that they ran over the boy's nose, and disturbed him in his sleep.

After some time, however, a gentleman who had come to his master's house, gave Whittington a penny for brushing his shoes. This he put in his pocket, being determined to lay it out to the best advantage. The next day seeing in the street a woman, with a cat under her arm, he ran up to her to know the price of it. The woman, as the cat was a good mouser, sought a good price for it, but on Whittington telling her he had but a penny in the world, and that he wanted a cat sadly, she let him have it.



This cat Whittington concealed in the garret, for fear she should be beat about by his mortal enemy the cook, and here she soon killed or frightened away the rats and mice, so that the boy could now sleep as sound as a top.

Soon after this, the merchant who had a ship ready to sail, called for all



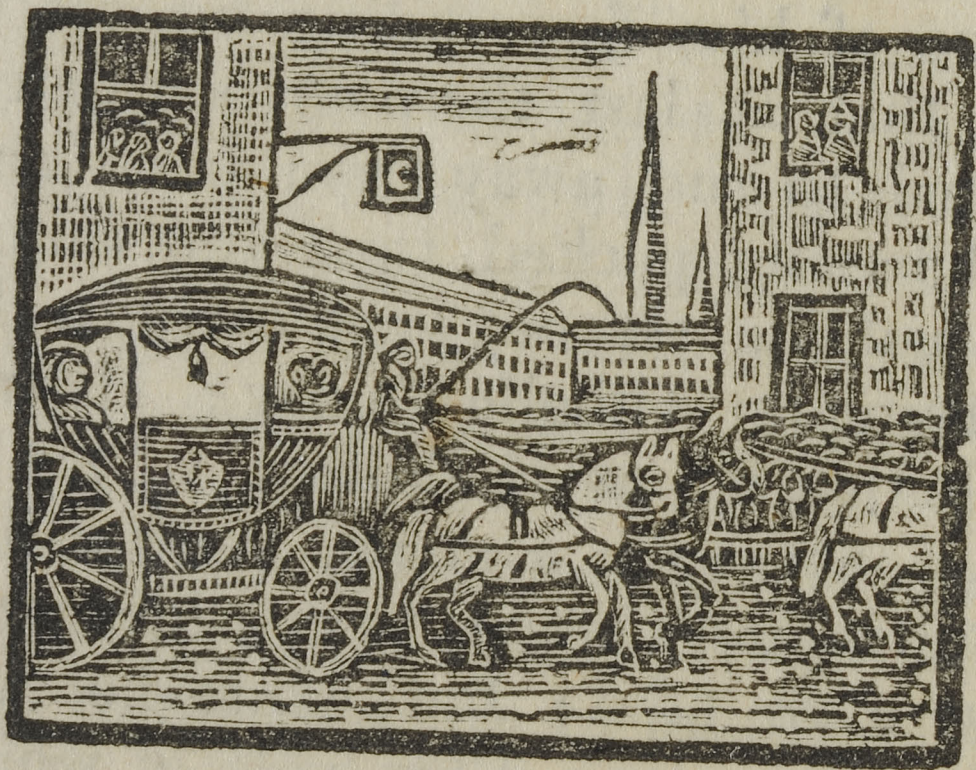
his servants, as his custom was, in order that each might venture something to try their luck, and whatever they sent was to pay neither freight nor custom: for he thought, (and he thought justly) that God Almighty would bless him the more for his readiness to let the poor partake of his good fortune.

All the servants appeared but poor Whittington, who having neither money nor goods, could not think of sending any thing to try his luck; but Miss Alice thinking his poverty kept him away, ordered him to be called. She then offered to lay down something for him: but the merchant said that would not do, for it must be something of his own. Upon this poor Whittington said, he had only a cat, which he had bought for a penny that was given him. Fetch thy cat, boy, said the merchant, and send her. Whittington brought poor puss and delivered her to the captain, with tears in his eyes, for he said, he now should be disturbed by the rats and mice as much as ever. All the company laughed at the oddity of the ad-

venture, and Miss Alice, who pitied the poor boy, gave him something to buy another cat. While puss was beating the billows, poor Whittington was severely beaten at home, by his tyrannical mistress the cook, who used him so cruelly, and made such game of him for sending his cat to sea, that at last the poor boy determined to run away from his place, and having packed up a few things he had, he set out very early in the morning on Allhallow's day: He travelled as far as Holloway, where he sat down upon a stone, (now called Whittington's stone) to consider what course to take; but while he was thus ruminating, Bow bells, of which there was then only six, began to ring, and as he thought, addressed him thus:

*Turn again Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London.*

Lord Mayor of London, said he to himself, what would not one endure to be Lord Mayor of London, and



ride in such a fine coach? Well I'll go back again, and bear all the pum-

melling and ill usage of Cicily, rather than miss the opportunity of being Lord Mayor. So home he went, and happily got into the house and about his business before Mrs. Cicely made her appearance.

The ship with the cat on board was long beating about at sea, and at last by contrary winds, driven on a part of the coast of Barbary, which was inhabited by the Moors, and unknown to the English. These people received our countrymen with civility, and therefore the captain, in order to trade with them, shewed them patterns of the goods he had on board, and sent some of them to the king of the country, who was so well pleased that he sent for the captain and the factor to his palace, which was about

a mile from the sea. Here they were placed, according to the custom of the country, on rich carpets flowered with silver and gold, and the King and Queen being seated at the upper end of the room, dinner was brought in, which was no sooner put down than an amazing number of rats and mice came and devoured it all. The fac-



tor, in surprise, turned to the nobles, and asked them if these vermin were not offensive? O yes, said they, very, and the king would give half his treasure to be freed of them, for they not only destroy his dinner, as you see, but they assault him in his bed, so that he is obliged to be watched while he is asleep. The factor jumped for joy, he remembered poor Whittington and his cat, and told the king he had a creature on board his ship that would destroy all these vermin. The king's heart heaved so high at the joyful news, that his white turban dropped off his head. Bring this creature to me, said he, and if she will perform what you say, I will load thy ship with jewels in exchange for her. The factor, who

knew his business, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Mrs. Puss. He told his majesty that it would be inconvenient to part with her, as when she was gone, the rats and mice might destroy the goods in the ship, but that to oblige his majesty, he would fetch her. "Run, run," said the queen, "I am impatient to see the dear creature." Away flew the factor, while another dinner was providing, and returned with the cat, just as the rats and mice were devouring that also. He immediately put down Mrs. Puss, who killed a great part of them, and the rest ran away. The king rejoiced greatly to see his old enemies destroyed by so small a creature, and the queen was highly delighted, and desired that the



cat might be brought near that she might look at her. Upon which the factor called "Pussy, Pussy," and she came to him, he then presented her to the queen, who started back, and was afraid to touch her, but when the factor stroked her and cried "Pussy, Pussy," the queen touched her, and cried, "Putty, Putty," for she had

not learned English. He then put her down in the queen's lap, where, she purring, played with her majesty's hand, and then sung herself to sleep.

The king having seen the exploits of Mrs. Puss, and being informed that she was with young, and would stock the whole country, bargained with the captain and factor for the whole ship's cargo, and then gave them ten times as much for the cat, as all the rest amounted to. With which, after taking leave of their majesties, they sailed with a fair wind for England, whither we must attend them.

The morn ensuing from the mountain's height,
Had scarcely spread the skies with rosy light,

When Mr. Fitzwarren arose from bed
to count over the cash, and to settle

the business of the day. He had just entered the counting-house, and seated himself, when some one came tap at the door. Who's there? says Mr. Fitzwarren. A friend, answered the other, I come to bring you news of the ship Unicorn: the merchant instantly opened the door, when the captain and factor entered with a cabinet of jewels and a bill of loading, for which the merchant lifted up his eyes and thanked heaven for sending him such a prosperous voyage. They then told him the adventures of the cat, and shewed him the cabinet of jewels which they had for Mr. Whittington, upon which, he cried out with great earnestness, but not in the most poetical manner.

Go call him, and tell him of the same,
And call him Mr. Whittington by name.

Some that were present told him that this treasure was too much for such a poor boy as Whittington; he said, "God forbid that I should deprive him of a penny, it is all his own, and he shall have it to a farthing." He then ordered Mr. Whittington in, who was at that time in the kitchen cleaning, and would have excused himself from going into the parlour, saying, the room was rubbed, and his shoes were dirty and full of hobnails. However the merchant made him come in, and taking him by the hand, said, indeed Mr. Whittington, I am in earnest with you, and sent for you to congratulate you on your great success. Your cat has produced you more money than I am worth in all the world, and may you

live long to enjoy it and be happy. At length being told that all the treasure belonged to him, he fell upon his knees, and thanked the Almighty for his providential care of such a poor miserable creature. He then gratified the captain, factor, and ship's crew, for the care they had taken of his cargo, and distributed presents to all the servants in the house, not forgetting his enemy the cook, though she little deserved it. Now it came to pass, that when Mr. Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, his hat cocked, and he was dressed in a rich suit of clothes, that he turned out a genteel young fellow; inso-much that Miss Alice, who had formerly seen him with an eye of compassion, now viewed him with other



eyes, which was occasioned perhaps, by his readiness to oblige her, and by occasionally making her presents of such things as he thought would be agreeable. When the father perceived they had this liking for each other, he proposed a match between them, to which both parties cheerfully consented, and the Lord Mayor

in his coach, court of aldermen, the company of stationers, and a number of eminent merchants attended the ceremony, and were elegantly treated at an entertainment made for that purpose.

History tells us, that they lived happily, and had several children, that he was Sheriff of London in the year 1340, and then Lord Mayor, that in the last year of his mayoralty, he entertained King Henry V. and his queen, after the conquest of France. Upon which occasion the king, in consideration of Whittington's merit, said, 'Never had Prince such a subject.' Which being told Whittington at the table, he replied, 'Never had subject such a king.' He constantly fed great numbers of

the poor ; built a church and a college to it, with a yearly allowance for poor scholars, and near it erected a hospital. He built Newgate for criminals, and gave liberally to St. Bartholomew's hospital and other public charities.



REFLECTION.

This story of Whittington and his Cat, and all the misfortunes which happened to that poor boy, may be considered as a cure for despair, as it teaches us that God Almighty has always something good in store for those that endure the ills that befall them with patience and resignation.

AGAINST LYING.

O 'tis a lovely thing for youth
To walk betime in wisdom's way ;
To fear a lie, to speak the truth,
That we may trust to all they say.

But liars we can never trust,
Tho' they should speak the thing that's true ;
And he that does one fault at first,
And lies to hide it, makes it two.

Have we not known, nor heard, nor read,
How God abhors deceit and wrong ?
How Ananias was struck dead,
Catch'd with a lie upon his tongue ?

So did his wife, Sapphira, die,
When she came in and grew so bold,
As to confirm that wicked lie,
That just before her husband told.

The Lord delights in them that speak
The words of truth ; but ev'ry liar
Must have his portion in the lake
That burns with brimstone and with fire.

Then let me always watch my lips,
Lest I be struck to death and hell,
Since God a book of reck'ning keeps,
For ev'ry lie that children tell.

THE END.

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