

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
WHITTINGTON  
AND  
*HIS CAT.*



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**D**ICK WHITTINGTON was a poor orphan. His parents died when he was of so early an age that he had no trace in his memory of what he was, or what he might have been, from being totally ignorant of what his parents were.

A worthy old widow in the village used to give him a little food, and an occasional shelter under her humble roof. Hearing London often mentioned by those whom he frequently associated with, he insensibly became so enamoured of it that

he would do them any act of kindness in his power, if they would but talk to him about the wonderful city whose streets were "paved with gold."



The good old widow perceiving that the poor boy had got something in his head that she thought would do him no good, earnestly took him to task, when he artlessly told her that it was the secret desire of his heart to go to London. She resolved to prevent him if possible, and pointed out to him the dangers that would beset so young and helpless a creature in undertaking so long a journey.

Whittington listened to what she said with surprise and anxiety: he loved her too much to do or say any thing that would grieve her; he therefore told her that he would abide entirely by her advice, and from that time till the widow died, (a period of little more than six months) he abode in the same house with her.

Whittington severely felt the loss of the old widow. He found himself once more thrown destitute upon the world. He therefore spoke to a waggoner, to let him walk by the side of his waggon to London, as the greatest of all favours; and the waggoner happening to be a good-natured fellow, consented, and also promised that he should sleep all night in his waggon. Poor Dick got safe to London, and was in such a hurry to see the fine streets, paved all over with gold, that he did not even say to thank the kind waggoner, but ran off as fast as his

legs could carry him; he walked about the streets till it grew dark, and finding nothing but dirt instead of gold, he sat down in a corner, and cried himself to sleep. Little Dick was all night in the streets, and next morning, being very hungry, he got up and walked about, and asked every body he met to give him a halfpenny to keep him from starving; but nobody staid to answer him, and only two or three gave him a halfpenny, so that the poor boy was quite weak and faint for want of food. At last a good-natured looking gentleman said to him "Why don't you go to work, my lad?" "That I would," answered Dick, "but do not know how to get any." "If you are willing," said the gentleman, "come along with me:" and so saying, he took him to a hay-field, where Dick worked briskly, and lived merrily till the hay was all made. After this, he found himself as badly off as before; and being almost starved again, he laid himself down at the door of Mr Fitzwarren, a rich merchant. Here he was seen by the cook-maid, an ill-tempered creature, who ordered him about his business. At this very moment Mr Fitzwarren came home to dinner, and seeing a dirty ragged boy lying at the door, he asked him why he did not go to work? Dick told him that he would work with all his heart, but he did not know any body, and he was very sick for want of food. Upon hearing this the kind merchant or-

dered him, to be taken into the house, and have a good dinner given to him, and to be kept to do what dirty work he was able for the cook.



Little Dick would have lived very happily in this good family, if it had not been for the ill-natured cook, who was finding fault and scolding him from morning till night; and besides, she was so fond of basting, that when she had no roast meat to baste, she would be basting poor Dick. At last her ill-usage of him was told to Miss Alice, Mr Fitzwarren's daughter, who

told the ill-tempered creature that she ought to be ashamed of herself to use a poor little forlorn boy so cruelly, and said she certainly should be turned away if she did not treat him more kindly.



The footman, an elderly kind-hearted man, was very good to the poor boy, and sometimes gave him a halfpenny to buy gingerbread. He also bought him a little book, and with the footman's help Dick soon learnt his letters, and afterwards to read.

One morning Miss Alice was going out for a walk, and the footman happening to be out of the way, Dick (who had got a good suit of clothes from his kind master) was told to walk behind her. As they went along, Miss Alice's pulled out her purse, and gave a poor woman some money; but as she was putting it into her pocket again, she dropped it; but Dick picked it up, and gave it to her again. Another time Miss Alice's parrot escaped, and flew to the top of a very high tree; none of the servants durst venture af er it, but Dick threw off his coat, and soon brought down the parrot to his mistress. Miss Alice thanked him, and liked him ever after.

Dick's flock bed stood in a garret, which was so overrun with rats and mice that they ran over his face, and made such a noise that he sometimes thought the walls were tumbling down about him. One day a gentleman visited Mr Fitzwarren, and

Dick cleaned his shoes so well that he gave him a penny. Next day, seeing a girl with a cat under her arm, he went up to her, and asked if she would let him have it for a penny. The girl



said she would, and Dick hid his cat in the garret, always taking her a part of his dinner, and in a short time he had no more trouble from the rats and mice. Soon after this, his master had a ship ready to sail; and as he thought it right all his servants should have some chance for good fortune as well as himself, he called them into the parlour, and asked them what they would send out. They all had something that they were willing to venture, except poor Dick, who had neither money nor goods, and so could send nothing at all. For this reason he did not come into the parlour with the rest; but Miss Alice guessed what was the matter, and ordered him to be called in. She then offered to lay down something for him from her own purse; but her father told her this would not do, for Dick must send something of his own; upon which poor Dick said, he had nothing but a cat, which he bought for a penny that was given to him. Fetch your cat then, my good boy, said Mr Fitzwarren, and let her go. Dick went up stairs, and brought down poor Puss, and gave her to the captain with tears in his eyes; for he said he should now be kept awake all night again by the rats and mice. All the company laughed at Dick's odd venture.

The ill-tempered cook began to use him more cruelly than ever, and always made game of him for sending his cat to sea. At last poor Dick could not bear this usage any longer; and, packing up his few things, set out very early in the morning of

All-hallows-day, which is the first of November. He walked as far as Holloway, and there sat down on a stone, which to this day is called Whittington's-stone, and began to think which road he should take further. While he was thus meditating, Bow bells began to ring, and he fancied their sounds seemed to say to him,—

Turn again Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!

Lord Mayor of London! (said he to himself,) why, to be sure I would put up with almost any thing to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in such a fine coach! Well, I will go back, and think nothing of the cuffing and scolding of the old cook, if I am to be Lord Mayor of London at last. Dick went back, and was lucky enough to get into the house, and set about his work, before the old cook came down stairs.

The ship with the cat on board was a long time at sea; and was at last driven by the winds on a part of the coast of Barbary, inhabited by Moors, unknown to the English. The people of this country came in great numbers to see the sailors, and treated them very civilly. The captain sent presents of the best things he had to the king of the country, who was so much pleased with them that he sent for the captain and his chief mate to the palace.

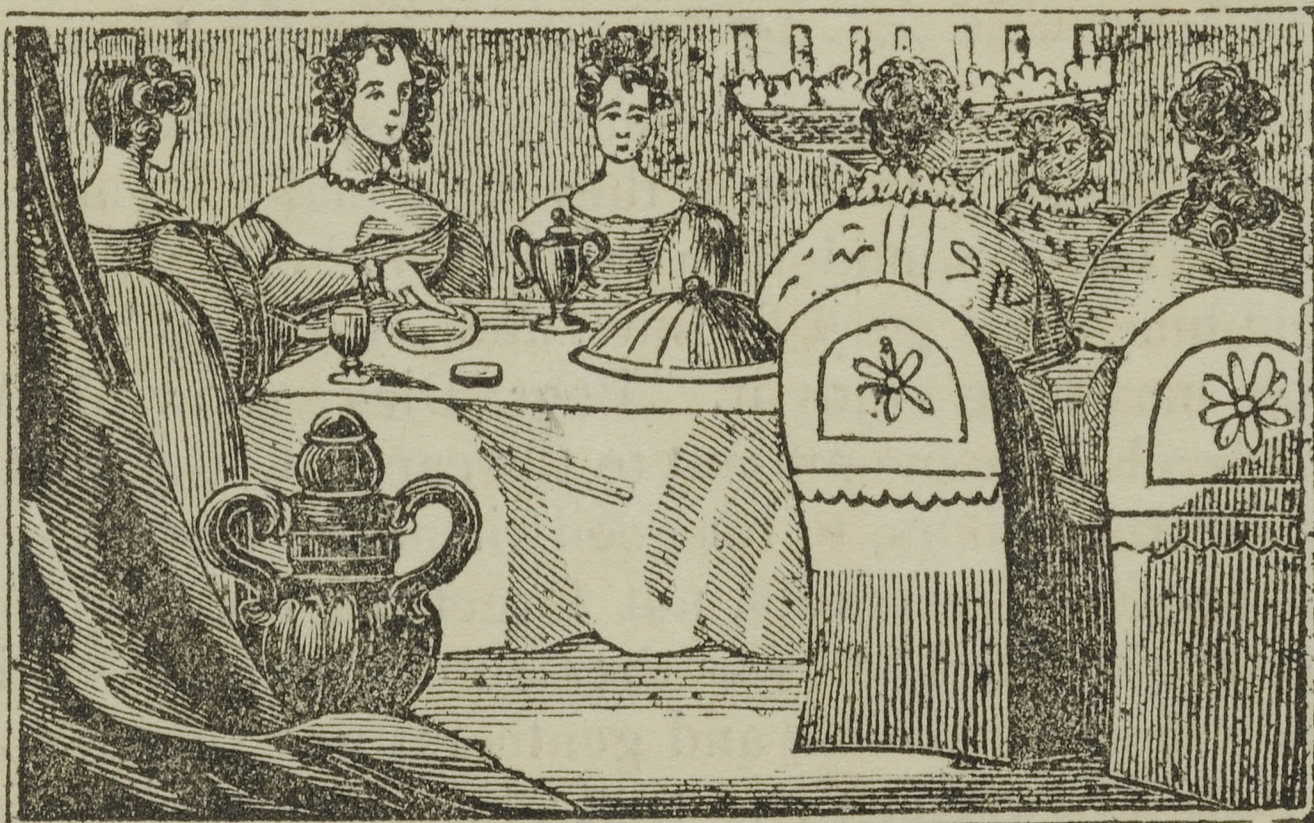


Here they were placed on rich carpets marked with gold and silver flowers. The king and queen were seated at the upper end of the room, and dishes of the greatest rarities were brought in for dinner; but before they had been set on the table a minute, a vast number of rats and mice rushed in, and helped themselves from every dish, throwing the gravy, and pieces of meat all about the room. The captain wondered very much at this, and asked the king's servants if these vermin were not very unpleasant. Oh! yes, they said, and the king would give half his riches to get rid of them; for they not only waste his dinner, but disturb him so in his sleep, that he is obliged to be watched. The captain was ready to jump for joy when he heard this; he

thought of poor Dick's cat, and told the king he had a creature on board his ship, that would kill all the rats and mice. The king was overjoyed at the news. Bring this creature to me, said he, and if it can do what you say, I will give you your ship full of gold for her. Away went the captain to the ship, while another dinner was got ready. He took puss under his arm, and came back to the palace soon enough to see the table full of rats and mice again devouring the second dinner. When the cat saw them, she did not wait for bidding, but jumped out of the captain's arm, and in a few moments laid almost all the rats and mice dead at her feet, and the rest scampered off to their holes.

The king and queen were quite charmed with the actions of Mrs Puss, and being told that she would soon have young ones, which might in time destroy all the vermin in the country, the king bought the captain's whole ship's cargo; and afterwards gave him a great deal of gold besides, which was worth still more, for the cat. The captain then took leave of the king and queen, and after a happy voyage, arrived safe at London.

One morning, when Mr Fitzwarren had just come into the counting house, and seated himself at the desk, somebody came



tap, tap, tap at the door. Who is there? said Mr Fitzwarren. A friend, answered some one, opening the door; when in stepped the captain and mate of the ship, followed by several men, carrying many lumps of gold, that had been paid him by the King of Barbary for the ship's cargo. They then told the story of the cat, and showed the rich present that the king had sent to Dick for her: upon which the merchant called out to his servants:

Go fetch him, we will tell him of the same;  
Pray call him Mr Whittington by name.

Mr Fitzwarren now showed himself to be really a good man, for when some of his clerks said so much treasure was too much for such a boy as Dick, he answered, God forbid that I should keep a single penny from him! He then sent for Dick



who was busy scouring some kettles, and would fain have excused himself, thinking they were making game of him, but Mr Fitzwarren made him come in, and ordering a chair for him, told him of his good fortune, and I wish, said the worthy man, you may long enjoy it. Poor Dick, (now Mr Whittington) made a handsome present to the captain, the mate, and every one of the sailors, to his goodfriend the footman, and the rest of his fellow-servants, not forgetting even the ill-natured old cook. When Dick was dressed out in a nice suit of clothes, he was as handsome and genteelas any young man who visited Mr Fitzwarren's; so that Miss Alice now looked upon him as fit to be her sweetheart. Mr Fitzwarren soon perceived their love for each other. The wedding-day was soon fixed; and they were attended to church by the lord mayor, the court of aldermen, the sheriffs, and all the rich merchants in the city, whom they afterwards treated with a magnificent feast.

History tells us that Whittington lived in great splendour. He was sheriff of London in 1360, and was several times lord mayor; the last time he entertained K. Henry V. on his majesty's return from the famous battle of Agincourt. In this company the king, on account of Whittington's gallantry, said, "Never had prince such a subject!" upon which Whittington answered, "Never had subject such a king!" and received the honour of knighthood. He built a church, an hospital, and also a college, with a yearly allowance to poor scholars.