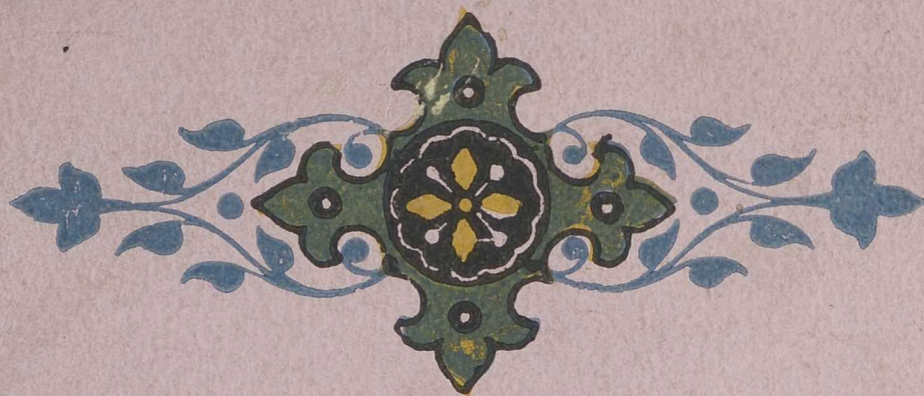


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Cecil George Pelham *from Mother*

AUNT LOUISA'S LONDON TOY BOOKS



PUSSY'S LONDON LIFE

LONDON.
FREDERICK WARNE & CO

PUSSY'S LONDON LIFE.

C. E. BOWEN.

UPON a sunny garden seat
The Lady Grilda sat,
Who was, we wish it understood,
Merely a titled cat.

It must be owned this sounds too grand ;
But I have heard them tell
That, being born with so much grace,
The name became her well.

This kitten was of Persia's breed,
'T was thence her parents came ;
Their coats were white and soft as silk,
And Grilda's was the same.

But sadly vain my lady was
Of all her lovely hair ;
She thought no kitten in the land
Could with herself compare.

And Pussy had another fault,—
She'd often disobey ;
Would sometimes to the larder go,
And carry bits away.

With much regret her mother saw
Her daughter's silly pride,
And, as a careful parent should,
To check such failings tried.

But Grilda, hating grave advice,
Would shake her pretty head,
And seldom listen to a word
Of what her mother said.

'T was in a quiet country house
She hitherto had dwelt,
But many a wish to see the world
Had Lady Grilda felt.

In London, or in some large town,
She fain would go and stay ;
Her beauty in this lonely place
She thought was thrown away.

A change came o'er her life at last,
And she was glad to know
'T was settled that to live in town
She very soon should go.

Whilst sitting on the garden seat,
As we before have said,
Visions of future London life
Completely filled her head.

But when a gentle step drew near,
From all these dreams she woke
To see her mother by her side,
Who thus to Grilda spoke :





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“To say a word or two, my child,
Before we part, I come ;
Words which, perhaps, may cross your
mind
When you are far from home.

“Grilda,”—the mother raised her paw,—
“Grilda, attend to me ;
Remember that where’er you go,
You must obedient be.

“I pray you ne’er again to take
A scrap that’s not your own,
Although it may be nothing more
Than just a chicken-bone.

“And recollect that Pussy-cats
Quite idle should not be ;
The pleasant task of catching mice
Is given you and me.

“Try and think less about your looks,—
You’re but a kitten small ;
Surely in such a little thing
Should be no pride at all.

“And now, my daughter, fare thee well ;
Attend to what I’ve said ;”
And then the mother rubbed her cheek
Against her kitten’s head.

I can’t be certain that the tears
In Grilda’s eyes arose ;
But, walking round her parent’s sides,
She purr’d and rubb’d her nose.

She really *meant* to try and mind
All that her mother said ;
But like a corn-sieve full of holes
Was Lady Grilda’s head :

The words went in at one white ear,
But not, alas ! to stay ;
For at the other out they slipp’d,
And vanish’d quite away.

Her future mistress, when in town,
Lived in Throckmorton Square ;
And very shortly afterwards
Grilda was taken there.

This town house, in her country eyes,
Seemed fitted for a queen ;
Such grandeur and such elegance
She never yet had seen.

And in her silly little heart
The foolish Pussy thought,
“This seems the proper place for me
To which I now am brought.



“A Londoner I am become,
There's something grand in that;
I'm very glad I've ceased to be
A simple country cat.

“Such vulgar work I need not do
As running after mice;
Poor mother might, at all events,
Have spared me *that* advice.”

But one thing Grilda much disliked
In this her London home,
That not beyond the garden gate
Was she allowed to roam.

Perhaps, too, if the truth were known,
She rather long'd to go,
Her graceful form and snow-white coat
The London cats to show.

She almost hoped that as she pass'd
They'd all turn round and stare,
And wonder who that kitten was
With such a noble air.

Within an empty attic room,
In which she used to play,
A window opening on the roof
Was left unclosed one day.

Grilda had very often thought
'T would be delightful fun
To find some way of slipping out,
And take a pleasant run.

Now was the moment for escape!
But first of all with care
She wash'd her face, arrang'd her tail,
And smooth'd her silken hair.

That she was doing very wrong
This naughty Pussy knew;
Yet, springing on the window-sill,
She through the op'ning flew.

'T was very pleasant for a time
To play and run about;
But soon she felt it dull, and wished
Some kitten would come out.

And then she found with great dismay
Her coat was getting soiled,
And feared that, ere 't was even seen,
Her beauty would be spoiled.

From such a black and dirty place
She saw 't was time to go;
So softly creeping down the wall,
She gain'd the street below.





Having from roof to roof skipp'd on,
She'd wandered from the square,
And reach'd a street which proved to be
A busy thoroughfare.

She stood bewilder'd with the noise,
Not knowing where to fly,
When suddenly a savage dog
Came running briskly by.

He stopp'd, for on a flight of steps
The trembling cat he spied;
Then darting up, with grinning teeth
To seize her neck he tried.

Never was cat more nearly caught.—
The dog had touched her tail,
When Grilda sprang, with bristling hair,
Upon an iron rail.

He hoped to reach her as she clung,
And leap'd with all his might;
But giving one more desperate bound,
She vanish'd from his sight.

In vain he hunted up and down,
And scented all around,
For Puss was safely hid inside
A coal-shed underground.

Whilst here she crouch'd behind some
coal

In miserable plight,
The owner came to close the door
And lock it for the night.

Set free next day, misfortune still
Appear'd to be her fate:
A milkman chanced to leave his pail
Outside an iron gate;

The pail was nearly full of milk,
Thus early in the day,
And there it stood, a tempting sight,
Exactly in her way.

'T was more than kitten could resist,
So scrambling up the side,
To reach the white delicious food
Poor starving Grilda tried.

The milkman saw her, and his lungs
Sent forth so loud a yell,
That overbalancing herself,
Into the pail she fell!

As quickly out she came again,
Dragged by the angry man;
And, smarting from his cuffs and blows,
All dripping, off she ran.



Alas, poor Pussy ! every hope
Of admiration o'er,
She only long'd to find her way
Back to her home once more.

But she, like others I have known,
The lesson had to learn,—
Though easy 't is to go astray,
'T is harder to return.

At length she saw what seem'd to her
A quiet little place
Beside a post, where she might creep
To wash her sides and face.

Yet even here poor Grilda found
She could not safely stay;
Some schoolboys passing by the spot
Soon pelted her away.

Another little wanderer
Was pacing up the street,
Like Grilda, scarcely knowing where
To turn her weary feet.

'T was Madge Dunlee, a beggar-girl,
Sent forth to beg her bread;
A child of want and woe was she,
Untaught, uncloth'd, unfed.

No food that day had touch'd her lips,
Yet all had pass'd her by;
No one had seen her outstretch'd hand,
Or listen'd to her cry.

And thus she linger'd on her way,
Till coming to a shop,
The fragrant scent of new-baked bread
Caused hungry Madge to stop.

She knew, poor child ! those loaves and
buns
Had not been baked for her,
Yet from the pleasant sight and smell
She did not care to stir.

She gazed so long, they came at last
To order her away;
The baker said 't was not the place
For beggar-girls to stay.

A woman passing from the shop
Possess'd a kindly heart;
She broke a penny roll in two,
And gave the child a part.

But just as Madge began to eat,
Came Grilda to her side,
And plain as starving Pussy could
To beg a morsel tried.



“There’s not enough,” thought Madge,
“I’m sure,
For Pussy and for me;
But yet how very weak and faint
The poor thing seems to be!

“There, take a bit; I know so well
How bad it feels to want;
Though as to giving any more,
No, Puss, indeed I can’t.”

But as she sat upon a step,
Eating her bit of bread,
Puss mew’d and touch’d her with her paw,
Imploring to be fed.

Her constant cries and eager looks
Went straight to Madge’s heart:
Of every piece of roll she ate
She gave the cat a part.

This little scene by chance took place
Close to Throckmorton Square,
And Grilda’s mistress from her house
Observ’d the hungry pair.

She noticed how the beggar-child
Her scanty meal had shared,
And how, though wanting food herself,
For Pussy she had cared.

She sent to bid her come within
Her hospitable door,
And gave her such a meal as Madge
Had never seen before.

Once more in safety, Grilda learn’d
A lesson from that day:
That ’t is not well for little ones
Always to have their way.

Her goodness to the stranger cat
For Madge vast changes wrought;
The lady placed her in a school,
And had her clothed and taught.

And thus we see what great events
From trifling things may spring;
So let us kindness try to show
To ev’ry living thing.



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