

WHITTINGTON

AND

HIS CAT.



LONDON:

JOHN HARRIS,

CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

LONDON

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WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT.



WHO has not heard of Whittington,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London Town ?

In former times, (for long ago
Lived Whittington, as records show,)
Poor country lads were often told
That London streets were paved with gold.
One day, as Dick upon the grass
Reclined, a waggon chanced to pass
To London bound : this thought occur'd—
I'll see if all is true I've heard :
So jumping up, away he ran,
And walk'd beside the waggon-man.

Judge Richard's feelings of surprise,
When London really met his eyes !
Not yet by sad experience taught,
His mind was fix'd in pleasing thought.

His friend the waggoner pass'd on ;
Poor Whittington was left alone ;
That night was houseless. In the morn,
The youthful wanderer rose forlorn :
Exhausted, spiritless, and faint,
The poor lad utter'd no complaint ;
But, weeping, stretch'd himself before
A wealthy Merchant's open door.
The portly Cook, who lived at ease
And slighted Richard's miseries,
Bade him depart, with angry face,
And seek another resting place.
Just at this moment to his home
The worthy master chanced to come :
“ Why lie you there, my lad ?” said he,
“ Labour you do not like, I see.”



“ I never would,” was Dick’s reply,
“ Thus idly on your door-steps lie,
Could I but work obtain. I’m weak,
And vainly for employment seek.”
“ Get up, poor fellow ; let me see—
Go, help them in the scullery.”

Soon as the morning sun arose,
Dick quickly to the kitchen goes
To ply his task ; and though the Cook
Oft greeted him with sullen look,



He still determined to obey,
And sought to please her every way.
Yet still she scolded, still would try
To make him from her service fly ;
Nay more, she sometimes took a broom,
And beat poor Richard round the room ;
But Whittington, as Christian should,
Always requited ill with good.

Within the room where Richard slept,
The rats and mice a revel kept ;

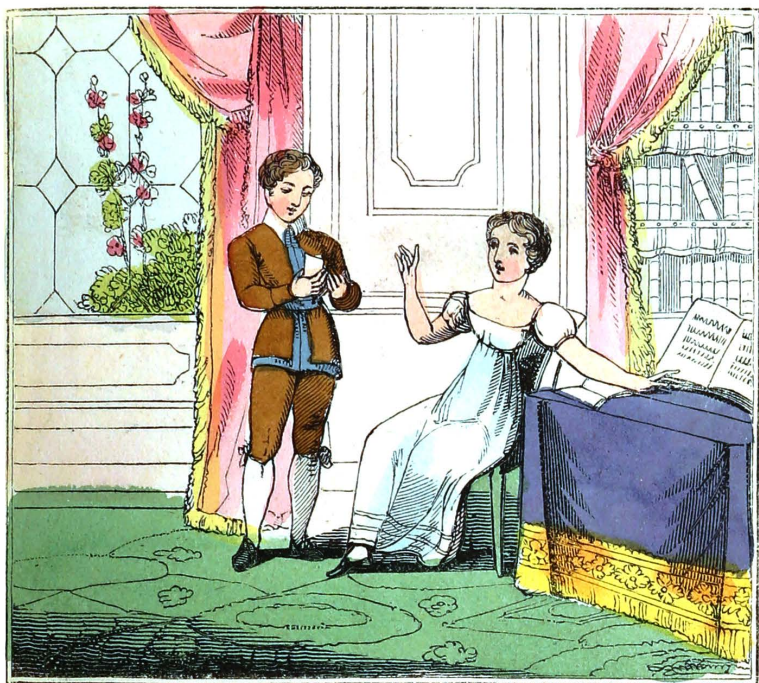


And nightly as he lay in bed,
They ran across his face and head :
Among such plagues the attempt was vain
Refreshing sleep or rest to gain.
Yet patient Dick did not repine,
He made his master's slippers shine.
The merchant's eye his labour traced :
And finding kindness rightly placed,
Sent him a penny by the maid,—
Industry always is repaid.
With this poor Richard bought a Cat,
Dire enemy to mouse and rat.



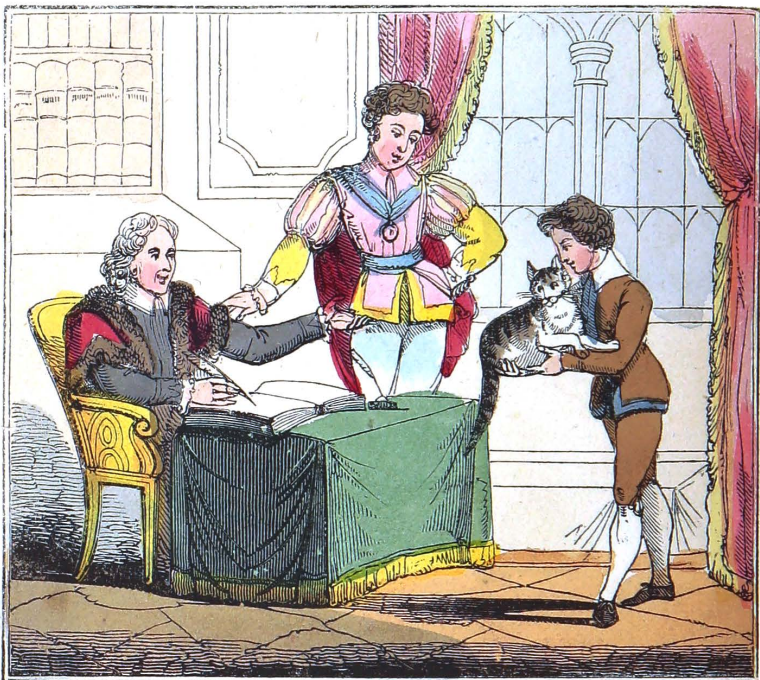
Puss went to work that very night,
And put the rats and mice to flight.

The Merchant had an only child,
A daughter affable and mild,
From whom poor Richard learn'd to read.
Slowly indeed did he proceed ;
But those who readily pursue
The proper path, may wonders do.
Just like the snail, which seldom fails
To reach the top of garden-rails,



Because with diligence its race
Continues till it gains the place.

The Merchant summon'd to the hall
His clerks and servants, one and all,
Told of his Ship, and then explain'd
How wealth was by her cargo gain'd ;
To fill the white and spreading sail,
His Captain waited for a gale ;
Then ask'd if each would like to send
Something which might to profit tend.



All but young Richard heard with joy
This kind proposal ; he, poor boy !
Stood mute and mournful. “ Why so sad ?
Hast nothing for a venture, lad ? ”
“ No, Sir,” in downcast tone he said,—
“ Only a Cat, Sir, over-head.”
“ Well, bring the Cat, my lad ; let’s see
How fortunate poor Puss may be.”

Dick wept his tabby friend to lose ;
His grief served others to amuse.



All ask'd him if his famous Cat
Would catch a fine gold mouse or rat ?
Or whether for enough 'twould sell
To buy a stick to beat him well ?
At last poor Richard's temper fail'd,
And anger for a time prevail'd :
For all he did or tried to do,
Still worse and worse Cook's conduct grew.

Darkness had scarcely pass'd away,
On the morning of All-Hallows day,



When from the house he turn'd to go
With heavy heart and footsteps slow.
His future path unknown, he sigh'd ;
For all was new and yet untried.
To Holloway he walk'd, when, lo !
He heard the merry bells of Bow :
In Richard's ear they seem'd to chime
This uncouth, strange, and simple rhyme :
“ Turn again, Whittington,
“ Thrice Lord Mayor of London.”



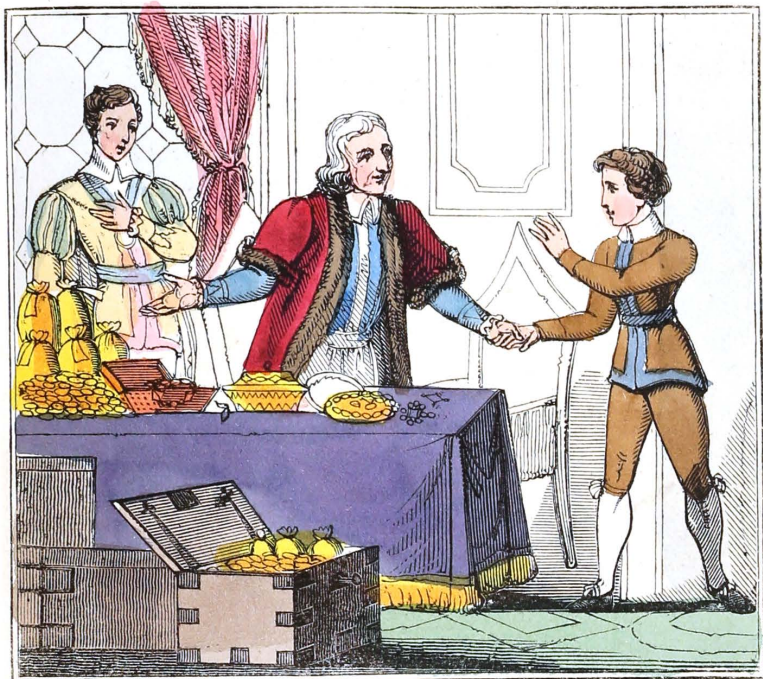
Mayor of London !—can there be
 Such honour yet design'd for me ?
 To London Dick return'd before
 His tyrant oped the kitchen door.

The Merchant's ship, by weather tost,
 Was driven on the Barbary coast.
 The Monarch of that distant land
 Had hourly visits from a band
 Of puny thieves—even rats and mice,
 Who ate up all things sweet and nice.

The Captain offer'd Dicky's Cat,
Which snapp'd up every mouse and rat.
“ Now,” said the King, “ cost what it may,
That creature must not go away,
But for the Cat I'll give you more
Than for the rest of all your store.”
And so he did ; and bags of gold
Upon the carpet they behold.
Which quickly to the ship convey'd,
Most nobly for poor Pussy paid.

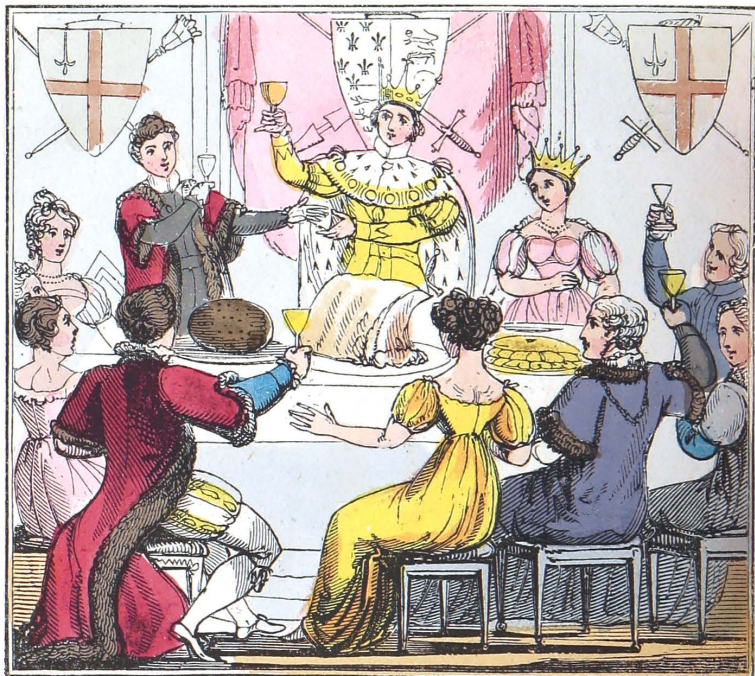
The Captain back to England came,
The herald of Dick's wealth and fame.

I need not say, to all he'd send
To share his wealth, to all a friend.
The cross Cook even was not forgot,
Now Heaven had so improved his lot ;
And numbers bless'd the happy hour
Which gave poor Richard wealth and power.



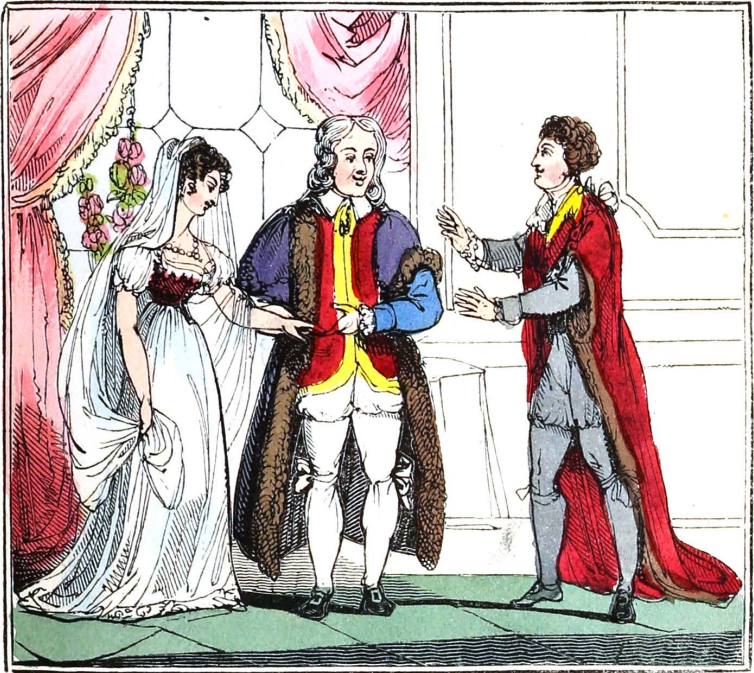
The Merchant wishing Richard joy,
Said, “ May you, simple honest boy,
Be happy ! May you ever be
Famed for your strict integrity !”

Sheriff of London he was made,
And in his new career display'd
Manners so mild yet dignified,
So free from forwardness and pride,
That all the Corporation said
He must an Alderman be made.



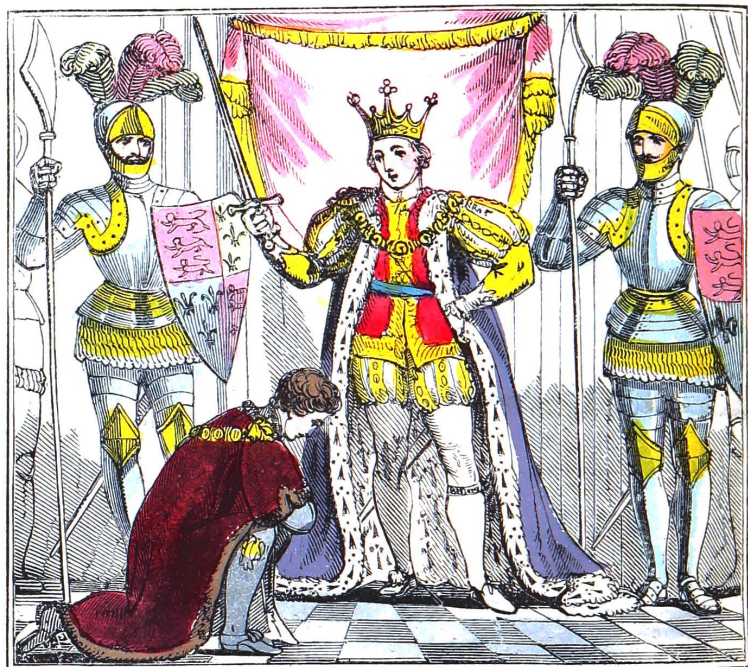
In this high office praise he earn'd,
And shortly after was return'd
Lord Mayor of London : then he told
What once he thought the bells foretold.

He thrice the Civic honour gain'd,
And each time general praise obtain'd.
When the heroic Henry came
Fresh from the well-fought field of fame,
In City chronicles we find,
With Whittington the Monarch dined.



The gentle Emma now became
A blooming bride to grace his name,
To bless his fireside hours, and share
The honours of the great Lord Mayor.

Let every Child who reads this tale,
Remember Virtue cannot fail
To be beloved : that Wealth cannot
Confer true glory on our lot ;
And that respect and love outweigh
The idle pleasures of a day :



That none on poverty should frown,
Nor on an honest man look down,
Since every virtue may adorn
The being whom you treat with scorn,
And none to wealth or rank can say,
“Ye cannot, shall not flee away.”

To make his glory yet more bright,
Our Whittington was dubb'd a Knight.

Sir Richard fully understood
The pure delight of doing good ;
Rejoiced to succour the oppress'd,
And aid the humble and distress'd.
A life in constant virtue spent,
Became his proudest monument.

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