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Whittington.

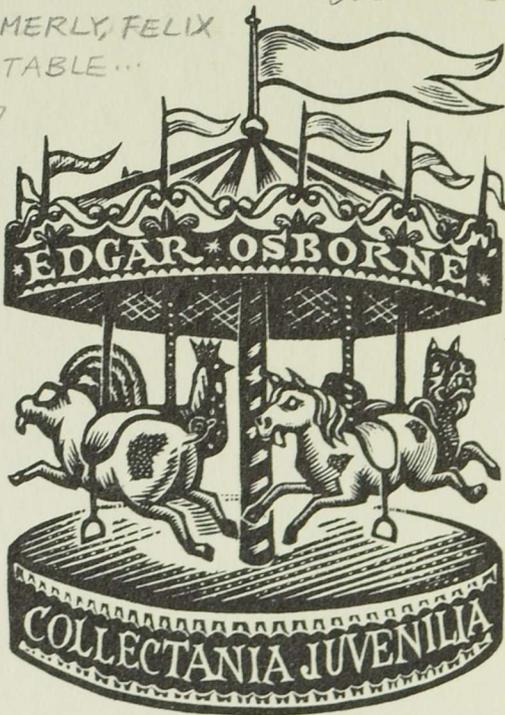
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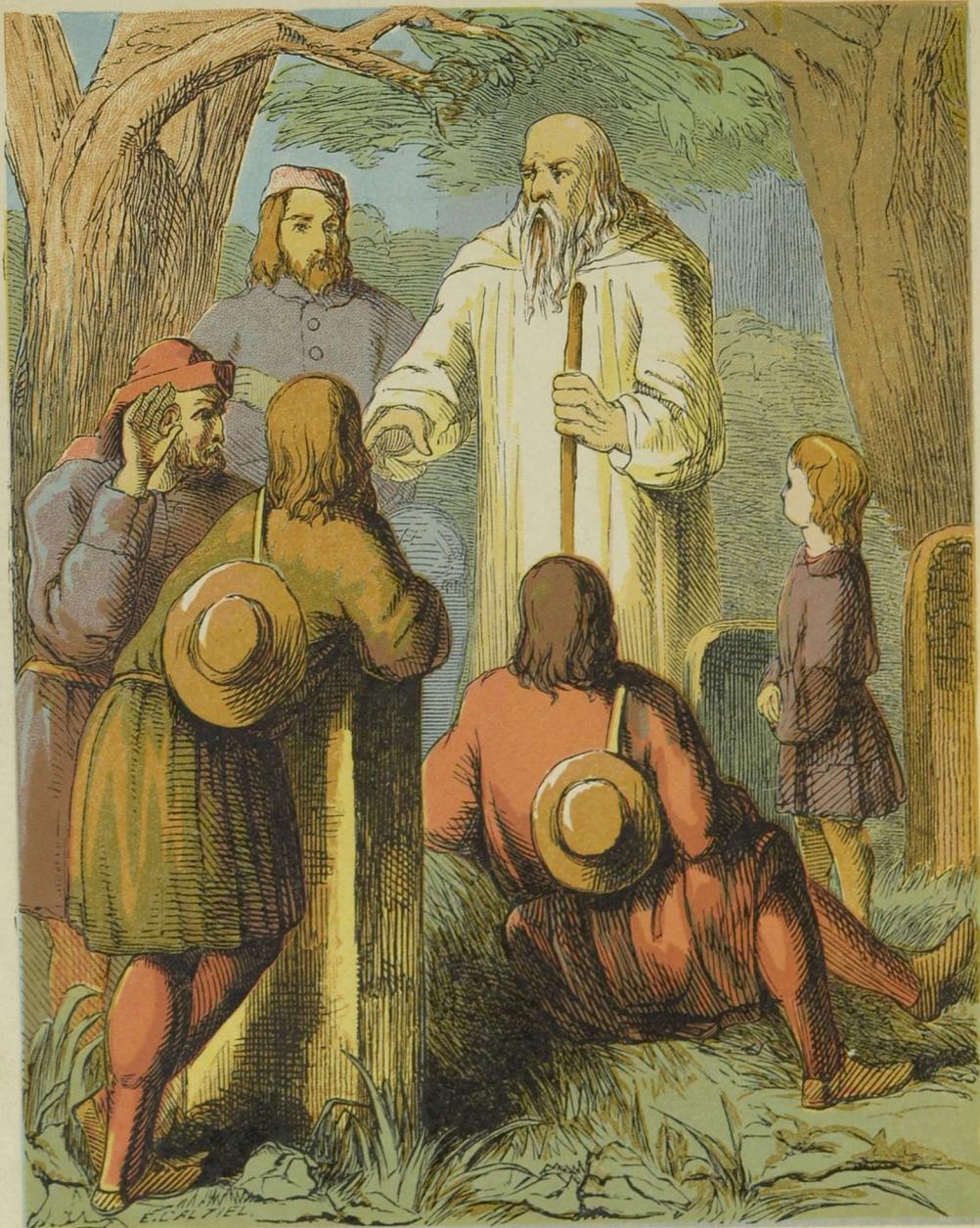
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Agnes Gordon

from her affectionate Mother

On the last day of the year
Eighteen hundred & fifty one.



The Home Treasury.

THE
VERITABLE HISTORY OF
WHITTINGTON AND
HIS CAT.



LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 36, STRAND, AND
JOSEPH CUNDALL, 12, OLD
BOND STREET.

1847.

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DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT.

ABOUT four hundred years ago, there was a Lord Mayor of London, whose name was Sir Richard Whittington. He rose to that office from being a poor orphan, living in a distant village without parents or friends. When he was a little child, and scarcely old enough to work, he was often in a sorry plight. He got but scanty fare for his dinner, and sometimes nothing but a dry crust for his breakfast; for the people who lived in the village were very poor themselves, and could spare him little of their own earnings.

For all this, Dick Whittington was a sharp boy, and was always picking up knowledge.

On Sundays he never failed to get near the farmers, as they sat talking on the tomb-stones

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

in the church-yard, before the clergyman was come; and once a week you might be sure to see little Dick leaning against the village cross, and near the well where travellers stopped to drink as they came from the next market-town; and in the barber's shop Dick was suffered to sit by the fire, and there he listened to all the news.

In this manner Dick heard of the great city called London; how the people were always busy, and by industry gained great riches. He often heard it said that the streets were paved all over with gold.

One day, a waggoner with his waggon and team of horses, all with bells at their heads, to sound their approach so that the people might bring out their goods to be carried, drove through the village while Dick was lounging near his favourite spot. The thought struck him that this waggon must be going to London; and, taking courage, he asked the waggoner to let him walk with him by his side. The man, hearing from poor Dick that he had no parents, and seeing, by his ragged state, that he could

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

not be worse off, told him he might go if he would; so off together they set.

Dick got safely to London: and so eager was he to see the fine streets paved all over with gold, that he ran as fast as his legs could carry him through street after street, expecting every moment to come to those that were all paved with gold. Poor Dick ran till he was tired: at last, it grew dark, and whichever way he turned, he saw nothing but dirt instead of gold, so he sat down in a dark corner, and cried himself asleep. He remained all that night in the streets; and next morning was very hungry, so he walked about, begging the passers by to give him a halfpenny to buy himself some bread: in the course of the day two or three gave him a halfpenny, which just kept him from starving. Being almost worn out, he crouched down at the door of one Mr. Fitzwarren, a great merchant. Here he was soon found by the cook, who was very cross and ill tempered, then very busy dressing the dinner. She, seeing poor Dick, called out, "What business

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

have you there, you lazy rogue? if you do not take yourself away, we will see how you will like some dish-water over you! I have some here that is hot enough to make you caper."

Just at this moment Mr. Fitzwarren himself came home from the city to dinner, and seeing a dirty ragged boy lying at the door, said to him, "Why do you lie there, my lad? You seem old enough to work. I fear you must be idle." "No, indeed, sir," said Whittington, "that is not true, for I would work with all my heart, but I know nobody, and I am very sick for want of food." "Poor fellow!" answered Mr. Fitzwarren, "pr'ythee get up, and let us see what ails thee."

Dick now tried to rise, but was obliged to lie down again, being too weak to stand; for he had eaten very little for the last three days, and was no longer able to run about and beg in the streets; so the kind merchant ordered that he should be taken into his house, and have a good meal directly, and that he should be kept to do what dirty work he was able for the cook.

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

Little Dick would have lived very happily in this worthy family, had it not been for the crabbed cook, who was scolding at him from morning till night; and was withal so spiteful that she seemed never easy but when beating his head and shoulders with a broom, or any thing else that happened to fall in her way. At last her ill usage of him became known to Mr. Fitzwarren's daughter. She was a kind girl, and asked the cook if she were not ashamed to use a little friendless boy so cruelly. This young lady's name was Alice: she was rather younger than Dick.

But though the cook was so ill-tempered, Mr. Fitzwarren's footman was not so. He felt compassion for the poor boy, and even took the trouble to teach him to read.

Besides the ill-humour of the cook, Whittington had another hardship. His bed was placed in a garret where there were many holes in the floors and walls. Whenever he went to bed, he was awakened out of his sleep by great

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

numbers of rats and mice, which ran over his face, and made a great noise.

Dick at last got rich enough to be master of two pence, and these he spent in buying a cat, which was famous for being an excellent mouser.

This cat Dick used to keep in the garret, and in a short time he had no further disturbance from the rats and mice, which were either killed or frightened away by his cat. So the cat and Dick became great friends and companions, and puss was delighted when he came to bed, and would purr and sing him to sleep.

Soon after this, the merchant, who had a ship ready to sail, richly laden, and thinking it but just that all his servants should have some chance as well as himself, called them before him and asked them what goods they chose and were able to send abroad. All the servants mentioned something they were willing to venture, but poor Whittington, having no money or goods, could send nothing; for which reason he did not come in with the rest. The merchant's daughter, Alice, guessing what was the

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

cause of his absence, sent for him, and offered to lay down some money for him from her own purse; but this, the merchant observed, would not do, for it must be something of his own. So they asked Dick if he possessed any thing at all; Dick said, he had nothing but a cat, which was his companion.

“Fetch thy cat, boy,” said Mr. Fitzwarren, “and let her go.” Dick hesitated, for he grieved to part with his cat; but being persuaded by every one, he at last brought poor puss, and delivered her to the captain with tears in his eyes.

Everybody laughed at the oddity of Whittington’s sending a cat; but Alice, who felt great pity for the poor boy, gave him some money to buy another cat.

This and other kindnesses, shown him by Alice, made the ill-tempered cook so jealous of the poor boy, that she began to use him more cruelly than ever.

At last, the unhappy fellow, being unable to

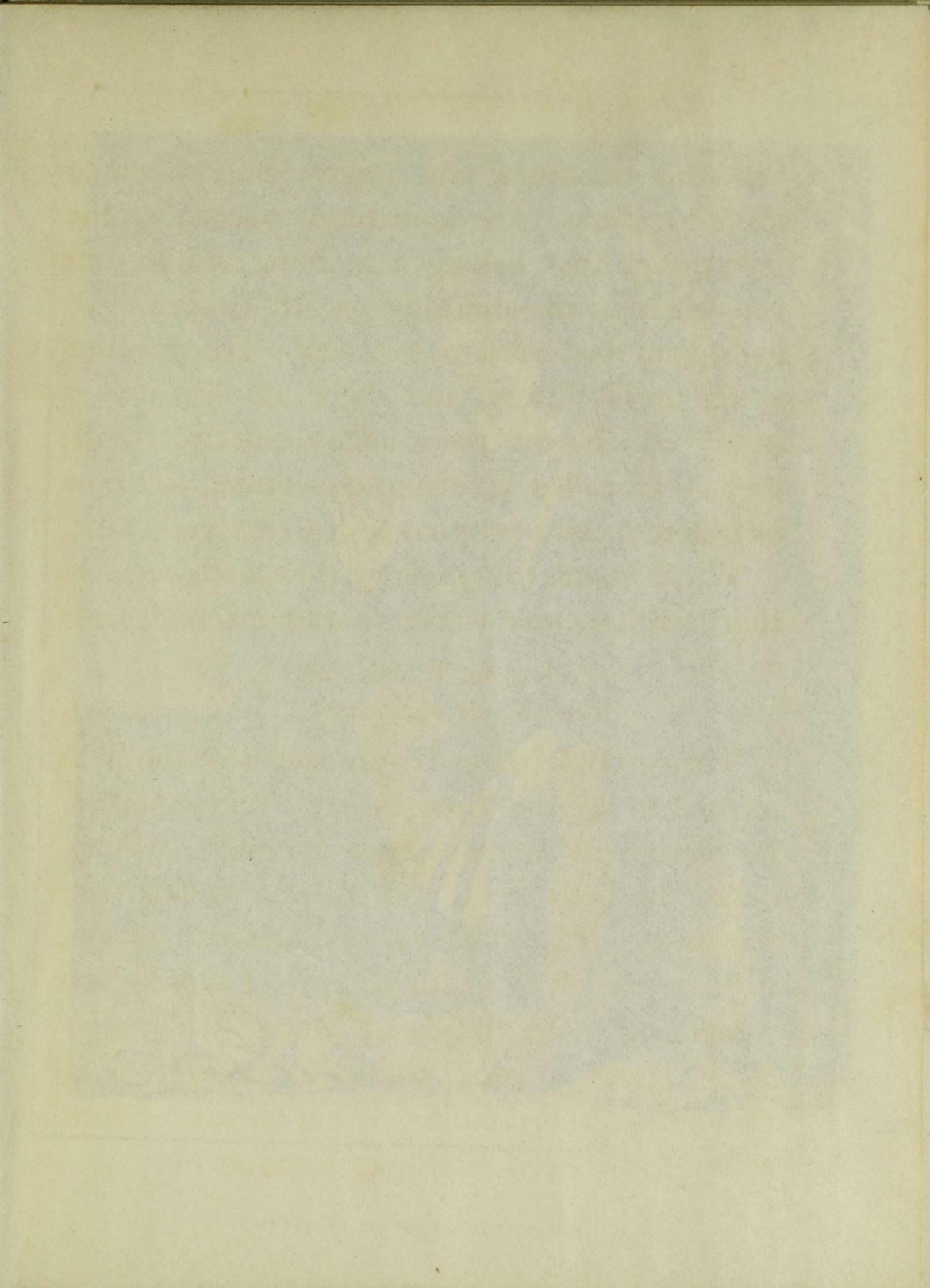
Dick Whittington and his Cat.

bear this treatment any longer, determined to leave his place. He accordingly packed up the few things that belonged to him, and set out very early in the morning on All-Hallows day before any body was out of bed. He travelled as far as Holloway, and there sat down on a stone, which, for years and years afterwards, used to be called Whittington's Stone, and now he began to consider what course he should take.

While he was thus musing, Bow-bells began to ring; and it seemed to him that their sounds said:

Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London.

Thrice Dick listened again, and still the bells seemed to say the same thing. "Nonsense!" he thought, "it must be a dream." 'Ding, ding,' the bells went, and still the sounds were the same. "Lord Mayor of London!" said he to himself. "Why, to be sure, I would bear something to be the Lord Mayor of London. Well, I will go back, and think nothing of all the cuffing and scolding of old Cicely, if I am at last to be Lord Mayor of London."





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Dick Whittington and his Cat.

So back went Dick, and got into the house, and set about his business, before Cicely came down stairs.

The ship, with Dick's cat on board, was long beaten about at sea, and at last was driven by contrary winds on a part of the coast of Barbary inhabited by Moors, who came in great numbers to see the people on board the ship, who being all white, puzzled the Moors, who had black faces. But the Moors treated the sailors with great civility, and, as they became better acquainted, showed eagerness to purchase the things with which the ship was laden.

The captain, seeing this, sent patterns of the choicest articles he had to the king of the Moors, and the king was so much pleased with them, that he sent for the captain and his chief mate to his palace. Here they were placed, as was the custom of the country, on rich carpets flowered with gold and silver; and the king and queen being seated at the upper end of the room, dinner was brought in, and was placed on the floor.

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

No sooner, however, were the dishes set before the company, than an amazing number of rats and mice rushed in, and helped themselves to every dish, scattering the viands all about the room.

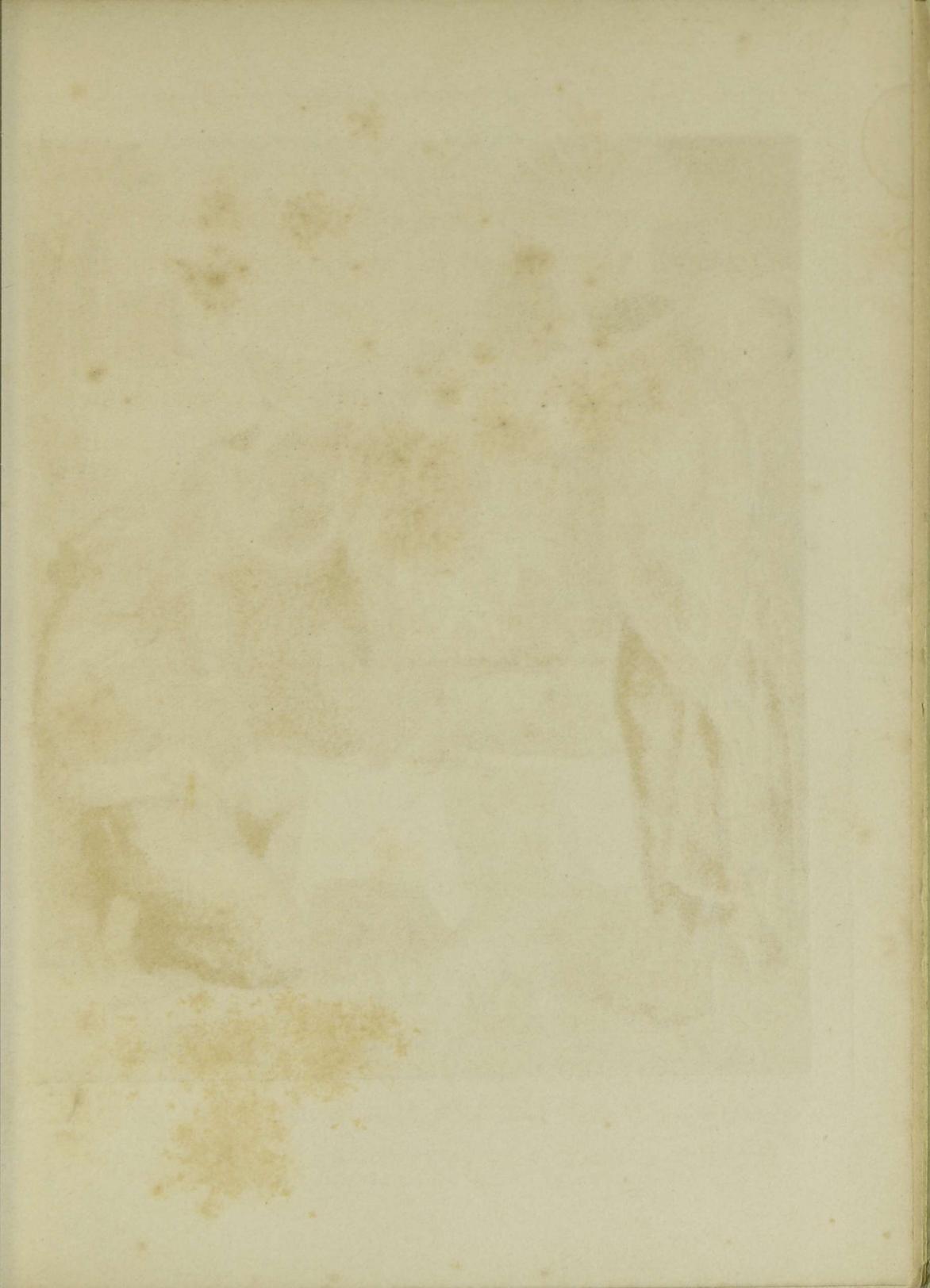
The captain was extremely astonished, and asked if these vermin were not very troublesome.

“Oh, yes,” said the Moors, “very troublesome indeed! and the king would give half his treasure to be free of them; for they not only destroy his dinner, but they disturb him even in his chamber, so that he is obliged to be watched while he sleeps.”

The captain, remembering poor Whittington's cat, was ready to jump for joy. He told the king that he had a creature on board his ship that would destroy them all.

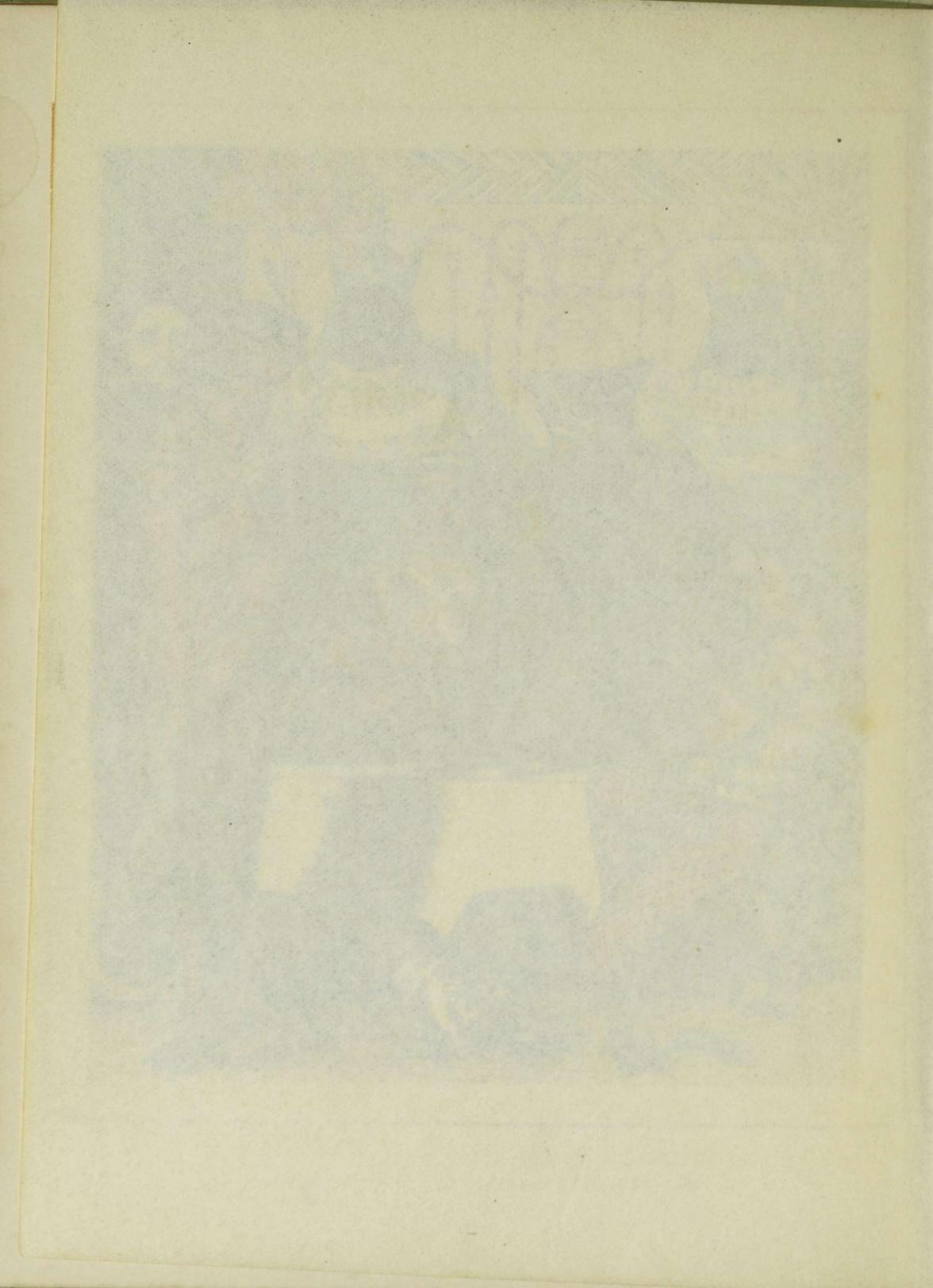
The king was overjoyed at the news and said “Bring this creature to me, and if she can really perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold in exchange for her.”

Away went the captain to the ship, whilst another dinner was providing, and taking puss





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Dick Whittington and his Cat.

in a bag, returned to the palace. The second dinner was brought in, and as usual in came the rats and mice, and the second dinner seemed in a fair way to meet with the same fate as the first.

Then the captain unloosed the bag, and pussy, at sight of the rats and mice, did not wait for bidding, but sprang from the bag, and in a trice killed numbers of the rats and mice, while the others scampered away to their hiding-places.

The king was greatly delighted with the wonderful exploits of Mrs. Puss. He had never seen a cat before; and quickly bargained with the captain for his whole ship's cargo, and afterwards agreed to give a prodigious quantity of gold for the cat. Then the captain, after taking leave of their majesties, with all his ship's company set sail, and, with a fair wind, after a happy voyage for England, safely arrived in the port of London.

One morning, Mr. Fitzwarren had just entered his counting-house, and was going to seat himself at the desk, when, who should arrive but the captain and mate of the merchant-ship,

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

from the coast of Barbary, followed by several men, bringing with them great bags of gold, that had been paid by the king of Barbary in exchange for the merchandise, and also in exchange for Mrs. Puss. Mr. Fitzwarren, the instant he heard the news ordered Dick Whittington to be called. When Dick came, he said, "My boy, I rejoice in the good news these gentlemen have brought you; the captain has sold your cat to the king of Barbary, and brought you in return all these riches."

Mr. Fitzwarren then desired the men to open the immense treasures they had brought.

Poor Dick's joy was very great indeed; he begged his master to take what he pleased, since to his kindness he was indebted for the whole. "No, no, this wealth is all your own, and justly so," answered Mr. Fitzwarren, "and I have no doubt you will use it generously. Dick however was too kind-hearted to keep all himself; and accordingly made a handsome gift to the captain, the mate, and every one of the ship's company, and afterwards

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

to his excellent friend the footman, and all the rest of Mr. Fitzwarren's servants, not even excepting crabbed old cook Cicely.

These riches soon altered Dick's state of life. Instead of being a scullion to a cook, he became a clerk in Mr. Fitzwarren's office, and in a year or two a merchant and was made the partner of his old master.

Alice, like Dick Whittington, had grown up, and the young people became fond of each other. Mr. Fitzwarren, finding out the goodness of Dick, consented that they should be married, and married they were at Bow Church, the very church whose bells had been the means of calling Dick back.

Dick became richer and richer ; at last he was chosen sheriff of London, and in a year or two afterwards made the Lord Mayor, and then he heard again the old Bow bells chiming and seeming to say more clearly than ever,

Here is Dick Whittington,
Now Lord Mayor of London town.

and such an excellent mayor he was, that the citi-

Dick Whittington and his Cat.

zens chose him to be their Lord Mayor three times. When king Henry the Fifth returned from the battle of Agincourt, he was feasted by Dick Whittington, and the king created him a knight, and then he became Sir Richard Whittington. He was charitable and kind to the poor, not forgetting that he had once been penniless: he built a college, with a yearly allowance to poor scholars, and near it erected an hospital. He also rebuilt the church of St. Michael, Paternoster Royal, where he was buried, when he died.

The effigy of Sir Richard Whittington used to be seen, until it was taken down, with his cat in his arms, over the archway of the late prison of Newgate, that went across Newgate-street.

THE END.

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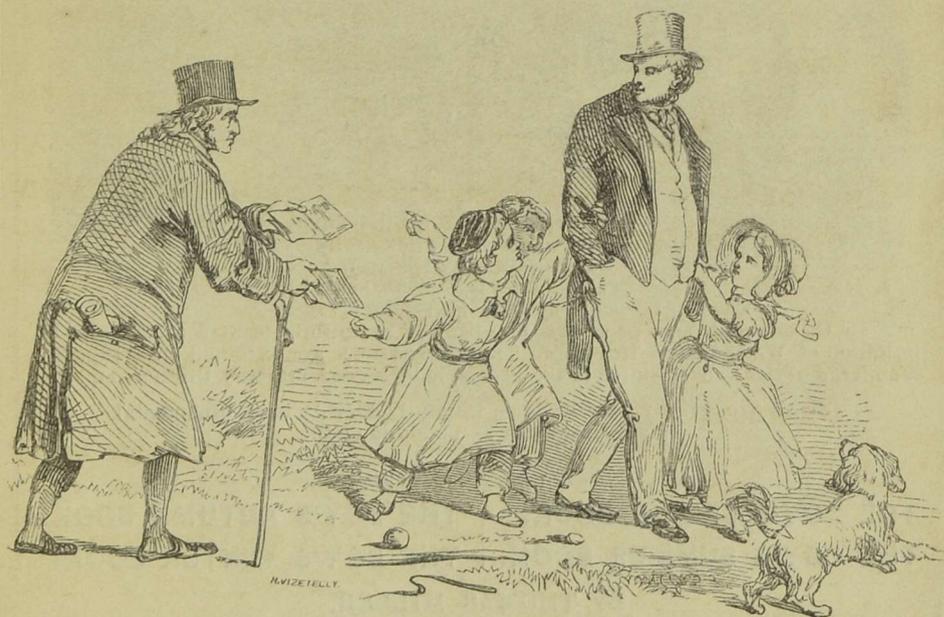
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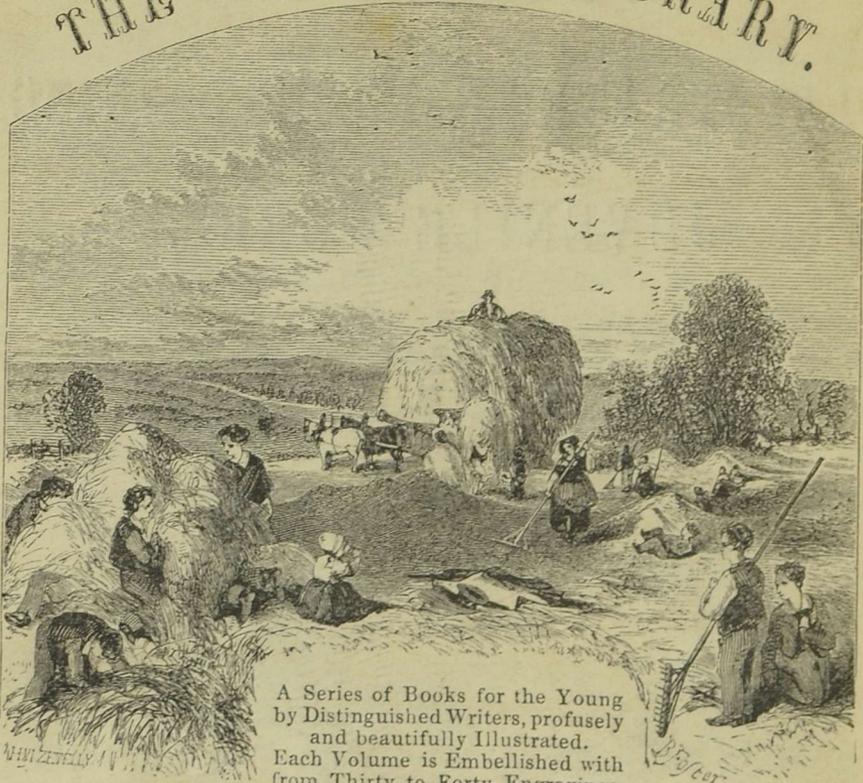
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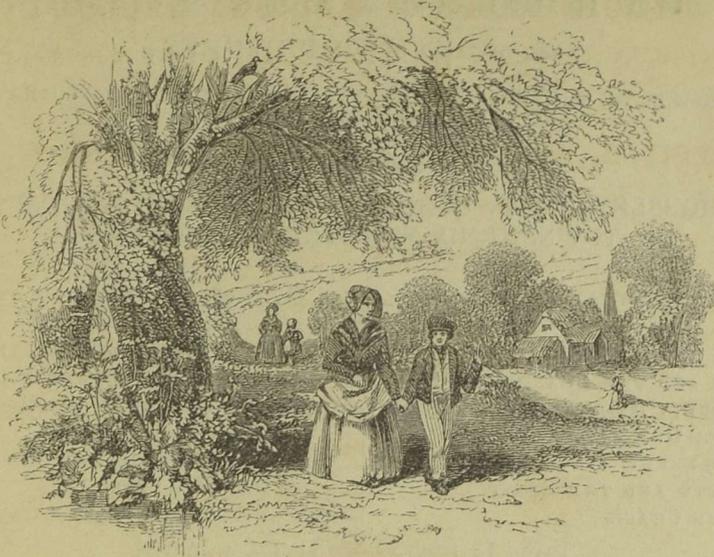
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