

# WHITTINGTON

AND

# HIS CAT.

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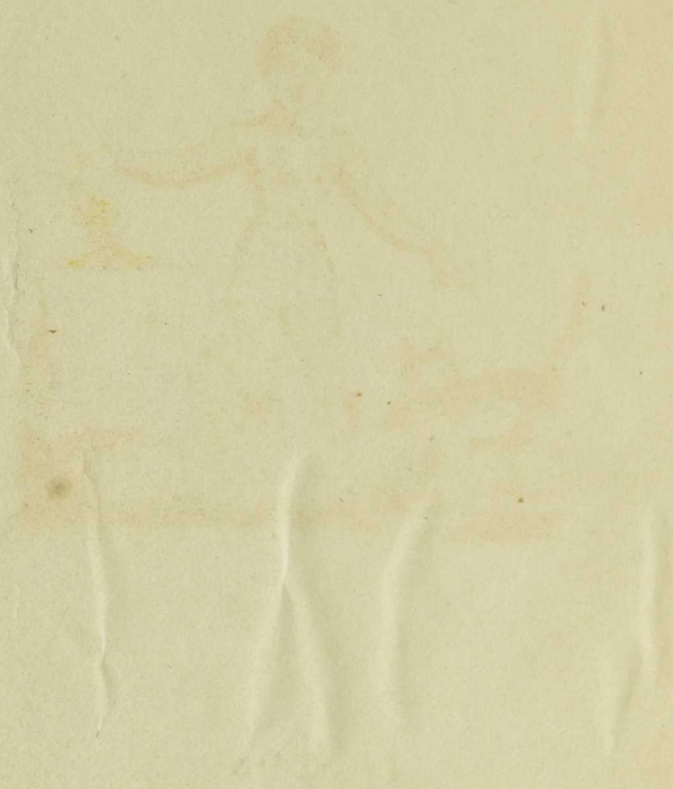
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LONDON:

JOHN HARRIS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

WHITTINGTON

THE END



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and to reverence the affluent, merely because they have riches, is an equal proof of little sense, and an unworthy disposition.

Virtue alone is the just object of respect among mankind ; and whether it glitter in splendour, or pine in indigence, its worth is equally eminent.

But as an instance of the great changes that happen in the world, and as an admonition against despising poverty, the history of Richard Whittington has been long preserved and admired.

That there was such a man there is no doubt : and if young persons will look into that part of the history of England, which gives an account of the events which happened during

the reign of King Edward the Third, they will find the name mentioned.

When Richard Whittington was a little boy, his father and mother died: they having been poor labouring people, their child was left without money, before he was able to support himself.

The village in which poor Dick lived, had no inhabitants but poor people, he was therefore very badly off. If he could get a little food for breakfast, and a little for dinner, by running about on errands, he was contented; but it happened, too often happened, that the unhappy boy could obtain nothing but a hard crust, or the fragments of potatoes.

Dick Whittington was, however,

not a stupid boy ; whenever he observed that persons were talking upon subjects that were not private, he always attended to the conversation.

On Sundays, when the farmers used to sit before church-time on the tombstones, conversing upon different things until the clergyman came, Dick was sure to be near them. In church, for he regularly went thither, even when he was in pain with hunger, he carefully attended to everything which the parson said. It was thus that he learned some prayers, which he used to say when alone, every morning and evening as long as he lived.

He would lean against the signpost of the village pot-house, at which

people stopped to drink when they came from the neighbouring market-town; and when the door of the barber's shop was open, Dick listened to the news, and to the remarks which passed between the barber and his customers.

These habits would have been mere idling, if the boy had had any other employment; but when poor Dick had an errand to perform, or anything else to do that he was able, he never loitered to hear the conversation of any one; but when he had nothing more useful to employ him, he endeavoured to pick up what knowledge he could from the discourse that passed in his presence.

In this manner he heard a great many things that seemed very ex-

traordinary to him, particularly about the great city called London.

Perhaps he heard some things that were true; but it is more than likely that he heard many things that were not so. It too often happens that people talk of things of which they know little or nothing; and people in the country do not know, and certainly did not then know, much about London.

Dick had, however, understood that all the people in this great city were ladies and gentlemen; that singing and music were heard all day; and that the streets were paved with gold.

One day, a large waggon with eight horses, each having bells at its head, was going through the village, while Dick was standing by the sign-post;





he imagined that this waggon must be going to the grand city of London.

He took courage, and asked the waggoner to let him walk with him by the side of the waggon.

When the man heard that the poor boy had no father or mother, and saw by his ragged clothes that he

could hardly be worse off in any place than he was now, he told Dick he might go if he would. They therefore set off together.

It would not be easy to discover now in what manner the poor boy contrived to get food on the road, nor how he could walk so great a distance as it is said to have been.

Perhaps some good-natured people in the towns through which they passed, when they saw a boy so poor and so ragged as he was, gave him something to eat, and perhaps the waggoner suffered him to get into the waggon during part of the journey, particularly in the night, so that he might have a little sleep among the boxes and packages.

Dick at last reached London; his

first object was to find the streets that were said to have been paved with gold.

For this purpose he soon left the waggoner, and ran as fast as he could from one street to another, hoping soon to find the golden pavement.

Dick had seen three guineas during his life, and remembered how much of other money had been given in change for each of them. If, therefore, he thought to himself, he could but find this pavement, and knock some little pieces off, he should then have as much money as he could wish for.

He ran about till he was tired, quite thoughtless of what had become of the waggoner, or of anything else.

At last it began to grow dark, and

he now believed that this great town had as much dirt on its roads and pavement, and as little gold, as any other place.

There were, however, no barns in which he could sleep amongst straw, and he therefore sat down in a dark corner, and cried himself to sleep.

He remained in the street all night ; and the next morning he remembered that he did not know a person who would give him a morsel of food.

He asked several persons as he passed by for a halfpenny to keep him from starving, but no one answered him. He had now been a long time without having eaten anything, and in all his former misery he had never been so hungry as he was now.

At length, a good-natured looking

gentleman observing how hungry the poor boy seemed, said to Dick, "Why don't you go to work, my lad?" "I would, Sir," said he, "but I do not know how to get any."

"If you are willing to work," said the gentleman, "come along with me;" and immediately he led the poor boy to a hay-field, where he worked briskly and merrily until the hay was made.

But after this, he found himself as badly off as before; and being almost starved, he lay down at the door of a large house which belonged to Mr. Fitzwarren, a rich merchant.

The cook-maid of the house saw him on the steps; she was an ill-tempered woman, and as she was



then preparing dinner for the family, she called out to poor Dick, "What business have you there, you lazy rogue? There are nothing but beggars about, and if you do not take yourself away, I will give you this hot dish-water over you, I think it will soon make you jump."

Just at that time, Mr. Fitzwarren himself came home to dinner, and when he saw the dirty ragged boy lying at the door, he said to him, "Why do you lie here, my lad? You seem old enough to do some kind of work; I fear that you are lazy."

"No, indeed, Sir," said Dick to him, "for I would work with all my heart, but I do not know any one, nor can I tell how to get work; and I am now sick for want of food."

"Poor fellow!" said Mr. Fitzwarren, "get up, and let us see what we can do for you."

Dick endeavoured to rise, but was obliged to lie down again; he was too weak to stand up. He had not eaten anything for three days, and was no longer able to walk about.



The kind merchant ordered him to be taken into the house, and have a good dinner given to him; he was also to remain, and do what dirty work he was able for the cook.

Little Dick would have lived very happily in this family, if it had not



been for the ill-natured cook, who found fault with him, and scolded him from morning till night. Nor was this all, she would beat the poor boy with the broom, or anything she could lay hold of.

How contemptible is that person who can tyrannize over any other that happens to be too feeble, or too dependent, to venture any resistance! There cannot be a more clear indication of a noble mind, than kindness or forbearance to those on whom insolence or injury might be practised with impunity. No true gentleman or lady ever ill-treated a servant, or spoke with unnecessary incivility to the most menial domestic.

The ill-usage which the cook in-

flicted upon poor Dick, at last came to the ears of Miss Alice Fitzwarren, the merchant's daughter.

This amiable young lady asked the ill-tempered creature, if she were not ashamed to use a little orphan boy in so cruel a manner? Miss Alice also told her, that if she did not treat poor Dick more kindly, Mr. Fitzwarren himself should be informed of her severity.

But although the cook was so unkind, the footman was very different. This good servant had lived in the family many years; he was an elderly man, and once had a little boy of his own, who died when about the age of Dick.

He, therefore, took compassion on this poor fellow, and would sometimes

give him a little money to buy fruit or cakes.

This footman was very fond of reading, when he could spare time; and would sometimes entertain the other servants in the evening, when work was over, by reading them some entertaining or instructive book.

Little Dick took great pleasure in hearing him, and he could not help wishing that he could read.

The good-natured man taught him his letters, and by degrees poor Dick was enabled to read a little; under such disadvantages he could get on but slowly, particularly as he had very little time unemployed by the cook.

His industry was now ascertained. Every one in the house was convinced that he was not a lazy boy; and a

circumstance which happened some time afterwards, afforded equal proof of his honesty.

Miss Alice was going out one morning for a walk, when the footman happened to be out of the way. Little Dick was sent for, and was desired to put on the suit of clothes which Mr. Fitzwarren had given him to wear on Sundays, when he went to church.

When he was cleaned, Miss Alice told him to walk behind her. As they went along, Miss Alice, seeing a poor woman who was carrying one child in her arms, and one on her back, took out her purse and gave the poor woman some money.

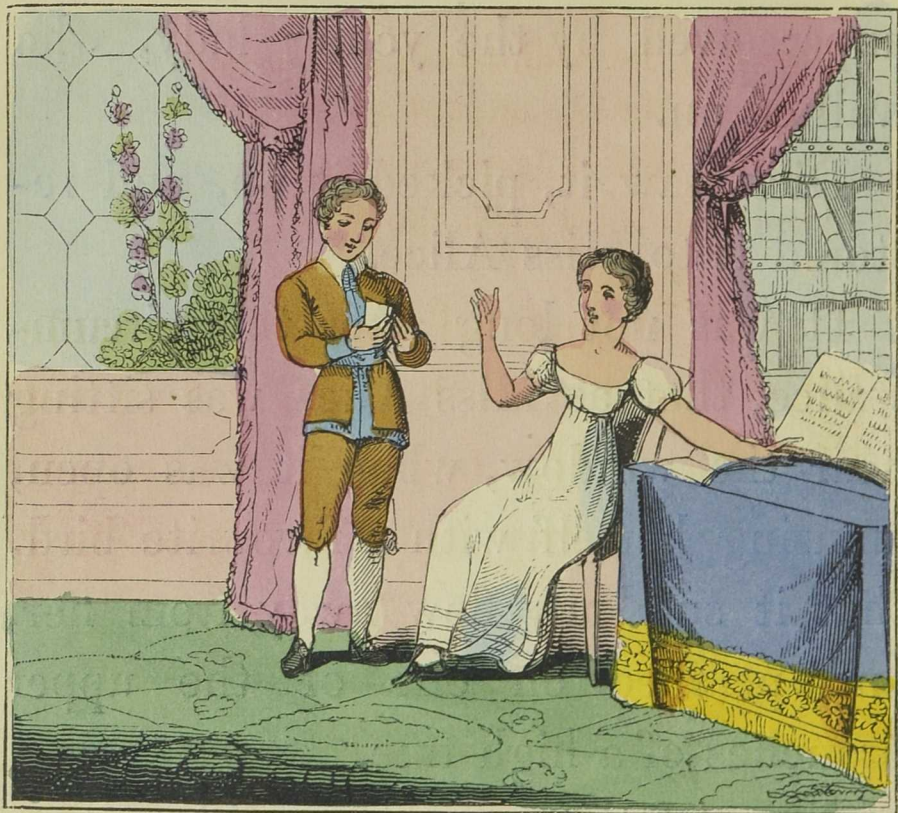
As she was returning the purse into her pocket, it fell to the ground,

unperceived by the young lady, who walked on.

Dick saw it, picked it up, and restored it to Miss Alice.

It was not long after this circumstance, that as Miss Alice was sitting near the window, when it was open, amusing herself with a favourite bird, that it suddenly flew away from her, and perched on one of the upper branches of a high tree.

None of the servants would venture to go such a height to catch it. But when Dick heard of it, he pulled off his jacket, and climbed up the tree, almost as nimbly as a squirrel; and, after a great deal of trouble, for the bird hopped from branch to branch, he caught it, and brought it safely to the young lady.



For this proof of his attention and courage, Miss Alice ever afterwards liked him, and was always pleased when he appeared to be happy. She heard poor Richard read and spell.

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 ill-humour of the cook became a little less harsh, but Dick had yet a hardship. His bed was in a garret, which had many holes in the floor and in the walls.

The rats and mice came through these holes in such numbers, that Dick was awakened out of his sleep every night by them; they ran even over his face, and made such a noise, that he could not rest.

One day, a gentleman, who was on a visit at Mr. Fitzwarren's house, gave Dick a penny for the pains he had taken in cleaning his shoes. The poor boy thought he could not employ



this little money better than by purchasing a cat with it.

Within a few days afterwards, he saw a woman carrying a cat in her arms; Dick offered her a penny for the animal, which she gladly accepted, assuring him that it was a very good mouser.

The poor boy hid his cat in the





garret, and always took care to carry it a part of his dinner.

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

In a short time he had the comfort to find that he had no more trouble from the rats and mice, but that he could sleep as soundly as he wished.

Not long after this, Mr. Fitzwarren had a ship which was about to sail to a very distant part of the world.

On this occasion, he thought it kind that all his servants should have some chance for good fortune as well as himself. He therefore had them called into the parlour, and asked each of them to send out something as an adventure.

All of them produced something except poor Dick, who had neither money nor goods, and therefore said that he had not anything to send.

For this reason he did not go into the parlour with the other servants; but Miss Alice, guessing the cause of his absence, desired that he should be called in.



She then said that she would put down some money for the poor boy ; but Mr. Fitzwarren said that would not do, but that Dick must send something of his own.

When Dick heard this, he said he had nothing in the world but a cat,

which he bought with a penny that had been given 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 a short time after, when the ship was about to

sail, with tears in his eyes, he delivered her to the captain; "for now," said Dick, "I shall be kept awake again all night by the rats and mice."

Those who were present, laughed at Dick's strange article for adventure: but Miss Alice, who felt pity for the poor boy, gave him some half-pence to buy another cat.

This, and many other instances of kindness which Miss Alice shewed to the poor youth, made the ill-tempered cook jealous of poor Dick, and she began to use him more cruelly than ever; she constantly made game of him too, for sending his cat to sea; and would ask him if he thought his cat would sell for as much money as would buy a stick to beat him with.

At last, poor Dick, unable to bear

this usage, which his industry and patience did not deserve, thought he would run away.

He packed up the very few things he had, and long before break of day he set out on 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 is still called "Whittington's stone," and he then began to think which road he should take.

While he was thus considering what to do, the bells of Bow church began to ring, and he fancied they said.

"Turn again, Whittington,  
Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

He listened to them, and could



not believe but that they said so very distinctly. “Lord Mayor of London,” said he to himself; “why, certainly I would put up with almost anything to be Lord Mayor of London. Well, I will go back, and think nothing of the beatings and scoldings of the old cook.”

Dick made haste back, and was so fortunate as to get into the house before the old cook had come into the kitchen.

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, the inhabitants of which had never yet been known to the English.

The people of that country came in great numbers to see the sailors, who were of a colour so different to themselves; they treated the seamen very kindly; and in a short time they were very eager to purchase the fine things with which the ship was laden.

When the captain discovered their inclination, he sent patterns of the



best things he had to the king of the country.

The black monarch was so pleased with them, that he sent an invitation to the captain and the next principal officer of the ship to visit his palace.

The captain and chief mate accordingly went, and found the king and queen sitting, according to the custom of the country, on rich carpets, which were inwrought with gold and silver.

The sovereign and his consort were placed at the upper end of the room, and a great number of dishes of great rarity and delicacy were brought in for dinner.

The dishes, however, had scarcely been placed a minute, before a vast

number of rats and mice rushed in, and took what they pleased, throwing pieces of the meat in every part of this elegant chamber.

The captain was very much surprised at this, and asked the king's servants if these creatures were not very unpleasant.

“ Oh ! yes,” they said, “ and the king would give half his riches, if he could get rid of them ; for they not only waste his dinner, as you perceive, but they disturb him even in his bed-room, so that he is obliged to be watched while asleep for fear of them.”

The captain was delighted when he heard this, for he immediately thought of Dick's cat ; and therefore told the king, that he had a valuable

animal on board his ship that would quickly destroy all the rats and mice in the palace.

The king was more delighted at this intelligence than the captain had been to give it.

“Bring this creature to me,” said he, “and if it can do what you say, I will fill your ship with gold for it.”

The captain, to make sure of the good fortune which seemed to await poor Dick’s adventure, answered, “that the animal was so active and clever in catching rats and mice, that he could hardly bear to part with it; but that to oblige their majesties he would fetch her.”

“Run! run!” said the queen, “for I am anxious to see a creature that can render us such a service.”



The captain went to the ship, and in the mean time another dinner was prepared. He took puss in his arms, and returned to the palace just in time to see the place full of rats and mice again, and the second dinner likely to be lost in the same way the former one had been.

When the cat saw them, she did not wait for orders, but jumped out of the captain's arms, and, in a few moments, almost all the rats and mice lay dead at her feet. The others scampered away to their holes as fast as they could run.

The king and queen were in ecstasies to see how readily this creature destroyed the animals by which they had hitherto been so much annoyed.

As long as they could remember, they had not enjoyed a quiet repast by day, nor a quiet sleep at night.

They requested the captain to endeavour to catch this valuable creature, which had already rendered them so much service, that they might look at it more nearly.

They expected that the captain

would be obliged to use great care in catching an animal which could perform such achievements ; but he only called, “ Puss, puss,” and the cat ran up to him, and jumped upon his knee.

He then held her towards the queen, who started back, and was evidently afraid to touch a creature that was able to kill so many rats and mice in so short a time ; but when she saw how gentle the animal was, and how pleased it seemed to be when caressed, she ventured to put her hand upon it.

The queen soon became familiarised to the cat, and at length took it into her lap ; she seemed delighted with its mildness, and full of admiration at its beauty, until puss purred herself

to sleep in the royal lap to which it had been invited.

When the king had seen all the actions of the cat, had observed how gentle it was as a domestic, as well as so valuable for its ability to keep his palace clear from such unwelcome intruders as had always disturbed him, he purchased of the captain the whole of the ship's cargo.

But for the cat alone, he gave him a great quantity of gold, much more indeed than he had paid for the whole of the cargo besides.

The captain then took leave of the king and queen, and the persons of their court, and with his crew set sail for England; and after a safe voyage arrived at London.

One morning, soon after Mr. Fitz-

warren had come into his counting-house, the captain and mate of the ship, that had just arrived from the coast of Barbary, came in.

They were followed by several men, each of whom was carrying as much gold as he could stand under.

The merchant was not a little astonished at this display of wealth, because he knew that the whole ship and cargo he had sent out were not worth anything like so much as this gold.

The captain then told him the account of the cat's importance at Barbary, and the immense treasures which the king of that country had given for it.

“ Ah ! Sir,” said the captain, “ the venture that was most despised



when it was sent out, has, you see, proved the most productive in the end."

Mr. Fitzwarren then desired the servant to send Dick into the counting-house, adding, "Treat him with respect, for he is now far richer than I am."

The conduct of the merchant on this occasion, proved him to be a worthy and conscientious man; for, when some of the persons who were present said that this was too great a treasure for such a boy as Dick, he answered, "God forbid that I should withhold even the value of a penny from him; it is all his own, and he shall have it to himself."

This conduct was honourable, and worthy of a good citizen.

Mr. Fitzwarren might have withholden any part of this treasure from the boy, whose condition in life would have made it almost impracticable for him to obtain redress, and whose ignorance would have left him unconscious of any dishonesty.

The merit of doing all the justice that can be enforced, is but very little; the man of integrity is distinguished by doing, not only all the good he is bound to do, but all the good he ought to do.

When Dick was sent for, he happened to be scouring the cook's kettles, and was quite dirty; he wished, therefore, to excuse himself from going to his master, by saying that the great nails in his shoes would spoil the finely-polished floor.

Mr. Fitzwarren, however, made him come in, and ordered a chair to be placed for him. Poor Dick imagined they were making game of him, as the servants often did in the kitchen; and he therefore begged the merchant not to deride a poor simple lad, but to let him return to his work.

“Indeed, Mr. Whittington,” said the merchant, “we are in earnest; and I do most heartily congratulate you on the news which these gentlemen have brought.”

“The captain has sold your cat to a king on the coast of Barbary, and has brought to you in return far more wealth than I possess; and I sincerely wish that you may long enjoy it.”

Mr. Fitzwarren then desired the



men to produce the treasures they had brought with them ; and then said, “ Mr. Whittington, you have only to put this property into some place of security.”

Whittington knew not how to restrain his joy. Such a sudden change of fortune quite astonished him, al-

though it put him in raptures. For the first time since he had left the country village, he rejoiced that he had come to London.

He turned to his late master, and entreated him to accept a large portion of his wealth. “ You, Sir, took me into your house when I had no money nor friends, and was likely to die of hunger ; you have maintained me ever since, and from you I have had a home and food ; and it is by your means that I am now enriched. I beg you, therefore, to accept a share of this treasure, as a proof of my gratitude.”

“ No, no,” said Mr. Fitzwarren, “ it is all your own ; and the very offer you have just now made, convinces me, that with such a heart as

I believe you possess, you will employ these riches in a manner creditable to yourself, and advantageous to your fellow-creatures. But I must decline your offer, though I respect your motive in having made it."

Whittington then made the like request to Mrs. Fitzwarren, and to Miss Alice, who declined, with the kindest congratulations on his good fortune, to accept of any part of his wealth.

He made a most liberal present to the captain and to the mate of the ship; and every sailor belonging to her had reason, by his munificence, to bless the adventure of the cat.

His good friend the footman, he did not forget, but provided him with

the means of comfort without further labour as long as he lived. The rest of Mr. Fitzwarren's servants experienced his liberality ; and even the ill-natured old cook was not forgotten in the distributions of his generosity.

Perhaps this last circumstance was more to his honour than any other, because he had been so severely treated by this unkind woman ; and if he had marked her brutal behaviour by withholding any gift from her, she would have been justly served.

But how noble he appeared, when, as soon as he had the power to show his resentment, he then, for the first time, forgave and forgot her cruelty, and disregarded the opportunity he now possessed of taking revenge.

Resentment is a disposition within

the power of all persons ; but there are only few who can overcome it, and those few are the best and most noble of mankind.

After this, Mr. Fitzwarren advised him to send for proper tradesmen, and to appear in the dress of a gentleman ; he told him also that he should be happy to have his company in that house until he could provide a better.

When Whittington was dressed, his person was far from unprepossessing, and his countenance was intelligent.

He soon became habituated to his new mode of life, and the timidity of his humbler condition gave place to that modest confidence which enabled him to express his sentiments without silly bashfulness.



The most eminent instructors he could procure, were engaged to cultivate the talents which nature had given him, and to improve the very humble knowledge which the good-natured footman had imparted.

In the progress of time, his understanding and his manners assumed that superiority which became the inheritor of so much wealth. It did not, however, make him proud, for pride betrays weakness, and not superiority.

His improvement gave him that true superiority which consists in the consciousness of having means to do good, and the further consciousness that to do good is a duty, for the neglect of which there is no excuse. This superiority taught him also to

be kind to those who by misfortune were in affliction or worldly inferiority.

He recollected Mr. Fitzwarren's first conduct to him; he remembered that when that gentleman raised him from the step of his door, that he thought that the merchant was not only a good man but a great man, and did not feel that his kindness made him appear less important; "and," said Whittington to himself, "such attention to the distresses of others will not make me appear the less respectable."

The diligence with which he devoted his attention to every probable means of improvement, soon answered its intended object; he became as completely the gentleman in mind

and manners, as he had now for some time been by his extensive riches.

He availed himself of every opportunity for cultivating the favourable disposition of Miss Alice; and he had the happiness to find that his attentions to her were not unacceptable.

Mr. Fitzwarren had been able to judge his conduct during several years, and under the most varied circumstances. His favourable opinion, and his friendship towards Whittington, increased every year that he had known him.

This gentleman perceived the reciprocal regard that subsisted between his daughter and Mr. Whittington; and being fully persuaded that he



should never find a more worthy young man, he gave his cordial approbation to their mutual wishes, and they were married.

Whittington's honours did not stop here: his fellow-citizens of London held him in such respect and esteem, that, in the year 1360, he was chosen

one of the Sheriffs of the capital of England.

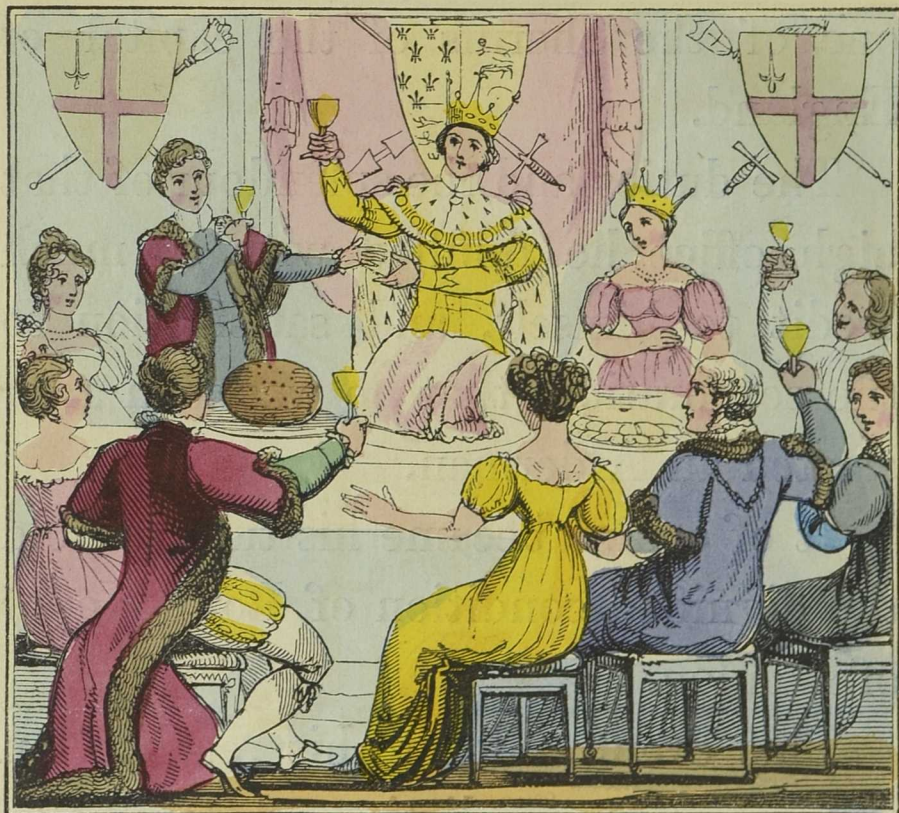
The duties and the splendour of that high office he fulfilled with so much credit to himself, and satisfaction to the corporation, that he was soon after elected an Alderman.

It of course became his turn to hold the dignified condition of Lord Mayor of London.

This event called to his recollection the imaginary prediction of Bow bells. His ambition was now eminently gratified.

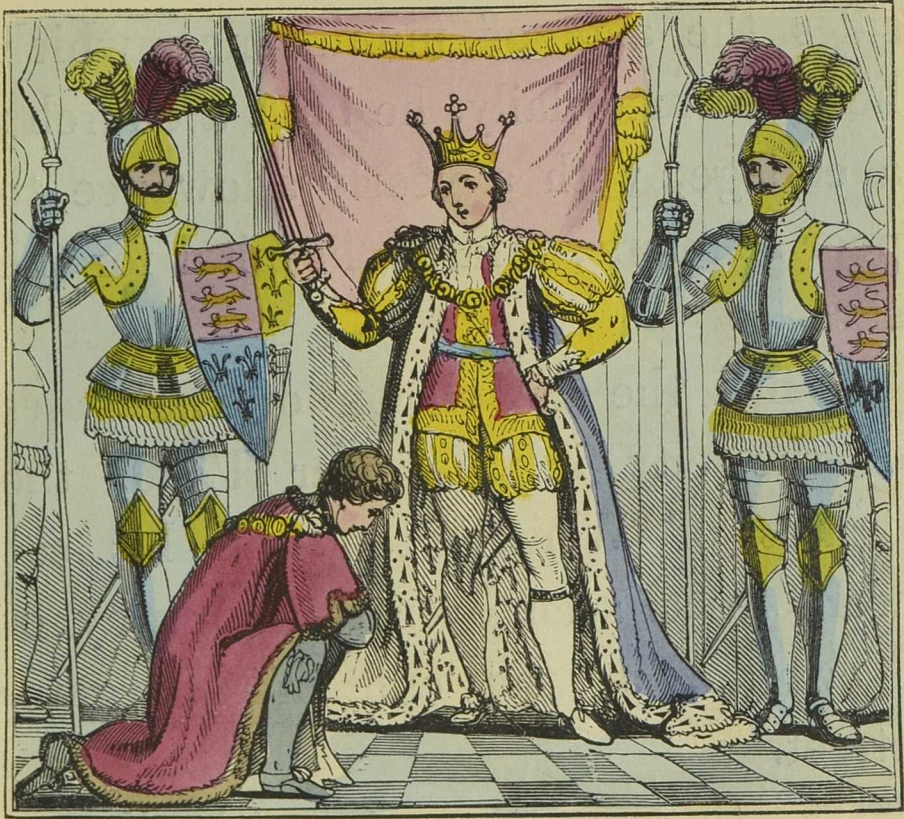
But his exemplary patriotism so highly pleased his fellow-citizens, that they entreated him to preside over them in character of lord mayor during two other years.

Whilst last serving in this dignified



office, he had the honour of giving an entertainment to King Henry the Fifth, when that monarch visited the city of London, after his return from the memorable battle of Agincourt.

His majesty was so pleased with the attentions and superior manners of Whittington, that he could not



help exclaiming of him, “ Never had prince such a subject.” To which the lord mayor replied, “ Never had subject such a prince.”

He soon afterwards received the honour of knighthood.

Sir Richard Whittington was always humane to the poor; and, be-

sides the acts of munificence which he performed daily, he built a church ; a college, with a yearly allowance to poor scholars ; and an hospital for the sick.

Until the demolition of the gates of the city in the year 1780, the figures of Whittington and his cat were to be seen over the archway of Newgate, at the end of Newgate-street.

Let this narrative admonish all persons not to despise poverty, for no one knoweth what may be the changes of life.

THE END.



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  40. THE DAISY, Coloured (or 1s. plain).
  41. THE COWSLIP, do. (or 1s. plain).
  42. The VILLAGE SCHOOL. 4 Plates, plain.
  43. THE HOLIDAY PRESENT, do.
  44. HISTORY of PRIMROSE PRETTYFACE, do.
- With 4 Engravings, bd. in leather backs.*
45. The VILLAGE SCHOOL.
  46. The HOLIDAY PRESENT.
  47. HISTORY of PRIMROSE PRETTYFACE.



