

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
WHITTINGTON  
AND  
HIS CAT.



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HISTORY  
OF  
WHITTINGTON.

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DICK WHITTINGTON was a very little boy when his father and mother died; so little indeed, that he never knew them nor the place where he was born. He strolled about the country as ragged as a colt, till he met with a waggoner who was going to London, and who gave him leave to walk all the way by the side of his waggon, without paying any thing for his passage; which obliged little Whittington very much, as he wanted to see London sadly; for he had heard that the streets were paved with gold, and he was willing to get a bushel of it. But how great was his disappointment, poor boy! when he saw the streets covered with dirt instead of gold, and found himself in a strange place, without a friend, without food and without money.

Though the waggoner was so charitable as to let him walk up by the side of his waggon for nothing, he took care not to know him when he came to town; and, in a little time, this poor boy was so cold and so hungry, that he wished himself in a good kitchen, and by a warm fire-side in the country.

In this distress he asked charity of several persons, and one of them bid him go work for an idle rogue—That I will, says Whittington, with all my heart; I will work for you, if you will let me.

The man, who thought this savoured of wit and impertinence, (though the poor lad intended only to shew his readiness to work) gave him a blow with a stick, which broke his head, so that the blood ran down. In this situation, and fainting for want of food, he laid himself down at the door of one Mr Fitzwarren, a merchant. Here the cook saw him, and being an ill-natured

hussey, ordered him to go about his business, or she would scald him. At this time Mr Fitzwarren came from the Exchange, and began also to scold the poor boy, bidding him go and work.

Whittington answered, that he should be glad to work, if any body would employ him, and that he should be able if he could get any victuals to eat; for he had eat nothing for three days, and he was a poor country boy, and knew nobody, and nobody would employ him.

He then endeavoured to get up, but was so very weak, that he fell down again; which excited so much compassion in the merchant, that he ordered the servants to take him in, and give him some meat and drink, and let him help the cook to do any dirty work she might set him about. People are too apt to reproach those who beg with being idle, but give themselves no concern of putting them in a way of getting business to do, or considering

whether they are able to do it ;  
his is not charity.

I remember a circumstance of this sort, which Sir William Thomson told my father with tears in his eyes, and it is so affecting, that I shall never forget it.

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### *Story of Sir William Thomson.*

WHEN Sir William was in the plantation abroad, one of his friends told him he had an indentured servant, whom he had just bought, that was his countryman, and a lusty fellow ; but he is so idle, says he, that I cannot get him to work. Aye, says Sir William, let me see him. Accordingly they walked out together, and found the man sitting on a heap of stones. Upon this, Sir William, after inquiring about his country, asked why he did not go out

to work?—I am not able, answered the man.—Not able! says Sir William, I am sure you look very well; give him a few stripes. Upon this the planter struck him several times, but the poor man kept his seat.

They then left him, to look over the plantation, exclaiming against his obstinacy all the way they went; but how surprized were they, on their return, to find the poor man fallen off the place where he had been sitting, and DEAD! The cruelty, says Sir William, of my ordering the poor man to be beaten while in the agonies of death, lies always next my heart. It is what I shall never forget, and will for ever prevent my judging rashly of people who appear in distress. How do we know what our own children may come to! The Lord have mercy on the poor, and defend them from the proud, the unconsiderate, and the avaracious.

But, to return to Whittington, who

would have lived happy in this worthy family, had he not been bumped about by the cross cook, who must be always roasting or basting; and when the spit was still, employed her hands upon poor Whittington; till Miss Alice, his master's daughter, was informed of it, and when she took compassion on the poor boy, and made the servants treat him kindly.

Besides the crossness of the cook, Whittington had another difficulty to get over before he could be happy. He had, by order of his master, a flock-bed placed for him in a garret, where there were such a number of rats and mice, that they often ran over the poor boy's nose, and disturbed him in his sleep. After some time, however, a gentleman who came to his master's house gave Whittington a penny for brushing his shoes. This he put into his pocket, being determined to lay it out to the best advantage; and the next day, seeing a woman in the street with a cat under

her arm, he ran up to her to know the price of it. The woman, as the cat was a good mouser, asked a great deal of money for it; but on Whittington's telling her he had but a penny in the world, and that he wanted a cat sadly, she let him have it.

This cat Whittington concealed in the garret, for fear she should be beat about by his mortal enemy the cook; and here she soon killed or frightened away the rats and the mice, so that the poor boy could now sleep as sound as a top.

Soon after this, the merchant, who had a ship ready to sail, called for all his servants, as his custom was, in order that each of them might venture something to try their luck, and whatever they sent was to pay neither freight nor custom; for he thought, justly, that God Almighty would bless him the more for his readiness to let the poor partake of his fortune:



“ He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord,  
who will return it seventy fold.”

All the servants appeared but poor Whittington, who having neither money nor goods, could not think of sending any thing to try his luck ; but his good friend, Miss Alice, thinking his poverty kept him away, ordered him to be called.—She then offered to lay down something for him, but the merchant told his daughter that would not do, for it must be something of his own. Upon which poor Whittington said he had nothing but a cat, which he had bought for a penny that was given him. “ Fetch thy cat, boy,” says the merchant, “ and send her.” Whittington brought poor puss, and delivered her to the captain with tears in his eyes, for he said, he should now be disturbed by the rats and mice as much as ever. All the company laughed at the adventure, and Miss Alice, pitying the poor boy, gave him something to buy another cat.

While puss was beating the billows at sea, poor Whittington was severely beaten at home by his tyrannical mistress the cook, who used him so cruelly, and made such game of him for sending his cat to sea, that at last the poor boy determined to run away from his place; and having packed up a few things he had, he set out very early in the morning, on Allhallow's day. He travelled as far as Holloway, and there sat down upon a stone to consider what course he should take; but while he was thus ruminating, Bow bells, of which there were only six, began to ring, and he thought their sounds addressed him in this manner:---

“ Turn again, Whittington,  
“ Lord Mayor of London.”

“ Lord Mayor of London,” said he to himself, “ what would one not endure to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in such a fine coach. Well, I'll go back again, and bear all the pummelling

and ill usage of Cicely, rather than miss the opportunity of being LORD MAYOR! So homē he went, and happily got into the house and about his buisness before Mrs Cicely made her appearance.

We must now follow Miss Puss to the coast of Africa, to that coast where Dido expired for loss of Æneas.—How perilous are voyages at sea, how uncertain the winds and the waves, and how many accidents attend a naval life!

The ship which had the cat on board, was long beaten at sea, and at last, by contrary winds, driven on a part of the coast of Barbary, which was inhabited by Moors, unknown to the English. These people received our countrymen with civility, and therefore the captain, in order to trade with them, shewed them patterns of the goods he had on board, and sent some of them to the king of the country, who was so well pleased, that he sent for the captain and the factor to his palace, which was about a

mile from the sea. Here they were placed, according to 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, which consisted of many dishes; but no sooner were the dishes put down, but an amazing number of rats and mice came from all quarters, and devoured all the meat in an instant. The factor, in surprise, turned round to the nobles, and asked, if these vermin were not offensive? "O yes," said they, "very offensive;" and the king would give half his treasure to be freed of them; for they not only destroy his dinner, as you may see, but they assault him in his chamber, and even in his bed, so that he is obliged to be watched while he is sleeping for fear of them.

The factor jumped for joy; he remembered poor Whittington and his cat; and told the king he had a creature on board the ship that would despatch

all these vermin immediately. The king's heart heaved so high at the joy that these news brought him, that his turban dropped off his head! 'Bring this creature to me, says he, and if she will perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold and jewels in exchange for her.' The factor, who knew his busines, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Mrs Puss. He told his majesty, that it would be inconvenient to part with her, as when she was gone, the rats and mice might destroy the goods in the ship---but, to oblige his majesty, he would fetch her. "Run, run," said the queen, I am impatient to see the dear creature." Away flew the factor, while another dinner was providing, and returned with the cat just as the rats and mice were devouring that also. He immediately set down Miss Puss, who killed a great number of them.

The king rejoiced greatly to see his old enemies destroyed by so small a

creature, and the queen was highly pleased, and desired the cat might be brought that she might look at her. Upon which the factor called "Pussey, pussey, pussey," and she came to him. He then presented her to the queen, who started back, and was afraid to touch a creature who had made such havoc among the rats and mice; however, when the factor stroked the cat, and called Pussey, pussey, pussey, the queen also touched her, and cried puttey, puttey, for she had not learned English.

He then put her down on the queen's lap, where she, purring, played with her majesty's hand, and then sung herself asleep.

The king having seen the exploits of Mrs Puss, and being informed that she was with young, and would stock the whole country, bargained with the captain and factor for the whole ship's cargo, and then gave them ten times

as much for the cat as all the rest amounted to. With which, taking leave of their majesties and other great personages at court, they sailed with a fair wind for England, whither we must now attend them.

The morn had scarcely dawned, when Mr Fitzwarren stole from the bed of his beloved wife, to count over the cash, and settle the business for the day. He had just entered the compting house, and seated himself at the desk, when somebody came, tap tap, tap, at the door. "Who's there?" says Mr Fitzwarren—"A friend;" answered the other. "What friend can come at this unseasonable time?"—"A real friend is never unseasonable," answered the other. "I come to bring the good ship UNICORN." The merchant bustled up in such a hurry, that he forgot his gout, instantly opened the door, and who should be seen waiting but the captain and factor, with a cabinet of jewels and a bill of lading;

at which the merchant lifted up his eyes, and thanked Heaven for sending him such a prosperous voyage. Then they told him the adventures of the cat, shewed him the cabinet of jewels which they had brought for little Whittington. Upon which he cried out with great earnestness, but not in the most poetical manner,

“Go call him, and tell him of his fame,  
And call him Mr Whittington by name.”

It is not our business to animadvert upon these lines. We are not critics, but historians. It is sufficient for us, that they are the words of Mr. Fitzwarren; and though it is beside our purpose, and perhaps not in our power to prove him a good poet, we shall soon convince the reader that he was a good man, which was a much better character: for when some, who were present, told him that this treasure was too much for such a poor boy as Whittington, he said, “God forbid that I



should deprive him of a penny;" it is all his own, and he shall have it to a farthing. He then ordered Mr Whittington in, who was at this time cleaning the kitchen, and would have excused himself from going into the parlour, saying the room was rubbed, and his shoes were dirty and full of hobnails. The merchant, however, made him come in, and ordered a chair to be set for him. Upon which, thinking they intended to make sport of him, which had been too often the case in the kitchen, he besought his master not to mock a poor simple fellow, who intended them no harm; but to let him go about his business. The merchant taking him by the hand, said, "Indeed Mr Whittington, I am in earnest, and sent for you to congratulate you on your great success. Your cat has produced you more money than I am worth in the world, and may you long enjoy it and be happy.

At length, being shewn the treasure,

and convinced by them that all of it belonged to him, he fell upon his knees, and thanked the ALMIGHTY for his providential care of such a poor miserable creature. He then laid all the treasure at his master's feet, who refused to take any part of it; but told him, he heartily rejoiced in his prosperity, and hoped the wealth he had acquired would be a comfort to him, and make him happy. He then applied to his mistress, and to his good friend Miss Alice, who refused to take any part of the money, but told him, they really rejoiced at his good success, and wished him all imaginable felicity. He then gratified the captain, factor, and ship's crew, for the care they had taken of his cargo; distributed presents to all the servants in the house, not forgetting even his old enemy the cook, though she little deserved it.

After this, Mr Fitzwarren advised Mr Whittington to send for the necessary people, and dress himself like a

gentleman, and made him the offer of his house to live in, till he could provide himself with a better. Now it came to pass, that when Mr Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, and dressed in a rich suit of clothes, that he turned out a genteel young fellow : and as wealth contributes much to give a man confidence, he in a little time dropped that sheepish behaviour, which was principally occasioned by a depression of spirits, and soon grew a sprightly and good companion, insomuch that Miss Alice, who had formerly seen him with an eye of compassion, now viewed him with other eyes, which perhaps was in some measure occasioned by his readiness to oblige her, and by continually making her presents of such things as he thought would be agreeable.

When her father perceived they had this good liking for each other, he proposed a match between them, to which both parties cheerfully consent-

ed, and the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, Sheriffs, the Company of Stationers, and a number of eminent merchants, attended the ceremony, and were elegantly treated at an entertainment made for that purpose.

History tells us, that they lived happy and had several children; and he was Sheriff of London in the year 1340, and then Lord Mayor; that in the last year of his Mayoracy he entertained King Henry the V. and his Queen, after his conquest of France. Upon which occasion, the king, in consideration of Whittington's merit, said "Never had Prince such a subject," which being told to Whittington at the table, he replied, "Never had subject such a King." He constantly fed great numbers of the poor; he built a college, with a yearly allowance for poor scholars, and near it erected an hospital. He built Newgate for criminals, and gave liberally to St. Bartholomew's hospital, and to other public charities.

## WONDERFUL PREDICTIONS.

HENRIETTA MARIA, queen of great Britain, at the death of her father, Henry the Fourth, was a cradle infant; and Barberino, at that time nuncio in France (and afterwards created Pope by the name of Urban VIII.), coming to congratulate her birth, and finding that the queen mother would have been better pleased if she had born a male, he told her, "Madam, I hope to see his, though your youngest daughter, great queen before I die." The queen answered, "And I hope to see you Pope." Both which prophetic compliments proved true, and within a short time one of another.

I have spent some inquiry, saith Sir Henry Wotton, whether the Duke of Buckingham had any ominous presagement before his end; wherein,

though ancient and modern storie have been infected with much vanity yet oftentimes things fall out of that kind which may bear a sober construction, whereof I will glean two or three in the Duke's case. Being to take his leave of his Grace of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, after courtesies of course passed betwixt them, "My Lord," says the Duke, "I know your Lordship hath very worthily good access unto the King our sovereign: let me pray you to put his Majesty in mind to be good unto my poor wife and children." At which words, or at his countenance in the delivery, or at both, my Lord Bishop, being somewhat troubled, took the freedom to ask him "If he had never any secret abodement in his mind?" "No," replied the Duke; "but I think some adventure may kill me as well as another man." The very day before he was slain, feeling some indisposition of body the King was pleased to give him the honour of a visit; and found him in his bed: where, and after much ser-

ous and private conference, the Duke, at his Majesty's departing, embraced him in a very unusual and passionate manner, and in like sort his friend the Earl of Holland, as if his soul had divined he should see them no more. Which infusions towards fatal ends have been observed by some authors of no light authority. On the very day of his death, the Countess of Denbeigh received a letter from him; whereunto all the while she was writing her answer, she bedewed her paper with her tears; and after a bitter passion, whereof she could yield no reason, but that her dearest brother was to be gone, she fell down in a swoon. Her said letter ended thus: "I will pray for your happy return, which I look at with a great cloud over my head, too heavy for my poor heart to bear without torment; but I hope the great God of heaven will bless you." The day following, the bishop of Ely, her devoted friend, who was thought the fittest preparer of her mind to receive

such a doleful account, came to visit her; but hearing she was at her rest, he attended till she should awake of herself; which she did, with the affrightment of a dream: her brother seeming to pass through a field with her in her coach, where, hearing a sudden shout of the people, and asking the reason, it was answered to have been for joy that the Duke of Buckingham was sick; which natural impression she scarce had related to her gentlewoman, before the Bishop was entered into her bed-chamber, for a chosen messenger of the Duke's death.

FINIS.