

THE
HISTORY
OF
WHITTINGTON,
WHO WAS AFTERWARDS
LORD MAYOR OF LONDON,
AND HIS
C A T.

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

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THE HISTORY
OF
WHITTINGTON.

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

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

In this distress he asked charity of several people, 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 favoured of wit and impertinence, (tho' 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, where the cook saw him, and being an ill-natured huffey, 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 at the poor boy, bidding him to go to work.

Whittington answered, That he should be glad

glad to work, if any body would employ him, and that he should be able if he could get some victuals to eat; for he had had nothing for three days, and he was a poor country boy, and knew no body, and no body would employ him.

He then endeavoured to get up, but he 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, that she had to set him about. People are too apt to reproach those who beg, with being able; but give themselves no concern to put them in a way of getting business to do, or considering whether they are able to do it; which is not charity.

— *Think of this ye affluent,
And when the overplus of your fortunes disturb
Your minds, think how little stops the lash of penury
And makes the wretched happy!*

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

S T O R Y

O F

SIR WILLIAM THOMPSON.

“ 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 man; 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 enquiring 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 still 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 upon the poor, and defend them from the Proud, the Inconsiderate, and the Avaricious."

But we return to Whittington; who would have lived happy in this worthy family, had he not been bumped about by the cross cook, whomust 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 then she had 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 stock 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 streets with a cat under her

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 would be beat about by his mortal enemy, the cook,—and here she soon killed or frighted away the rats and 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 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 had 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

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, pitied 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 Halloway, 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 great London."*

"Lord

“ Lord Mayor of London,” said he, to himself, “ what would not one 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 home he went, and happily got into the house and about his business before Mrs Cicely made her appearance.

We must now follow Miss Puff 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

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 see, but they assault him in his chamber, and even in 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 dispatch all these vermin immediately. The king’s heart heaved so high at the joy which this news gave him, that his turban dropped off his head ! “ Bring this creature to me,” says he, “ vermin are dreadful in a court, 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 business, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Mrs Puff. 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 his ship

“ 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 put down Mrs Puff,
 who killed a great number of them.

The king rejoiced greatly to see his old e-
 nemies destroyed by so small a creature, and
 the queen was highly pleased, and desired the
 cat might be brought near, that she might
 look at her. Upon which, the factor called
 “ Puffey, puffey, puffey,” 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 a havock among
 the rats and mice; however, when the factor
 stroked the cat, and called “ Puffey, puffey,
 “ puffey,” 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 to sleep.

The king having seen the exploits of Mrs
 Puff,

Puffs, 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 his 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 you good news of the 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? for 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 Mr Whittington.

Upon

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 these 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 all 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 hob-nails. 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, as 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

taking him by the hand said, "Indeed, Mr. Whittington. I am in earnest with you, 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 at 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 she 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

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, insonmuch 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 consented, and the Lord Mayor, Court of Alderman, 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, that he was Sheriff of London in the year 1340, and then Lord Mayor
that.

that in the last year of his Mayoralty, he entertained King Henry Vth, 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 poor. He built a church and a college to it 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.

F I N I S.