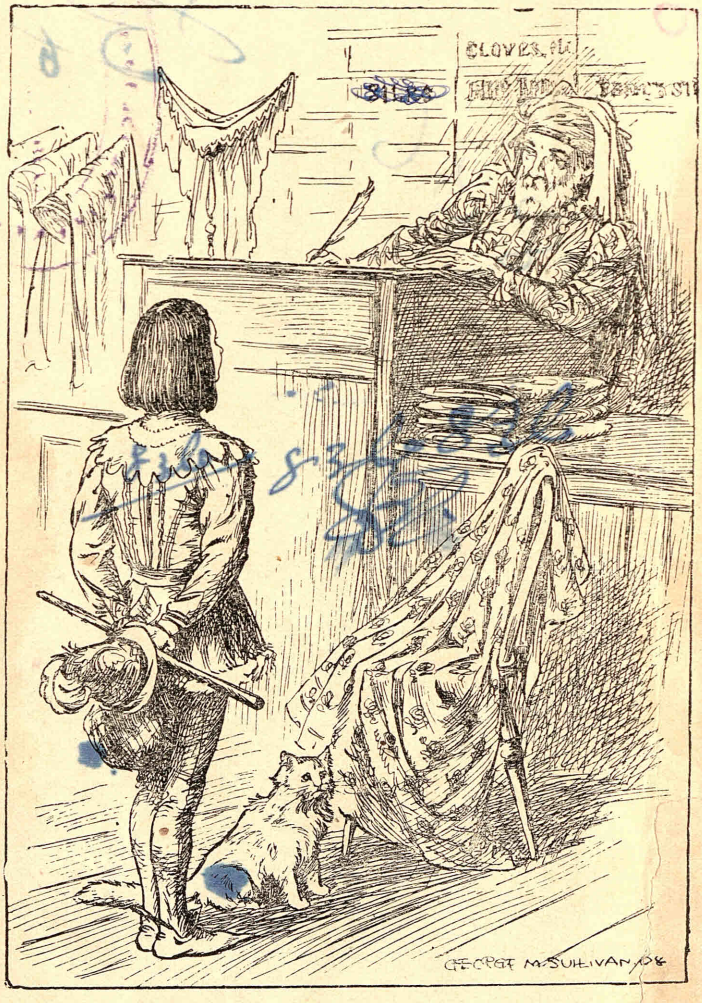
1649

836

836
N

DICK WHITTINGTON



"HULLO, LITTLE BOY, AND WHO ARE YOU?" (*p. 10*).

ARNOLD'S JUNIOR STORY READERS

AMEERUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL. ERNAKULAM. Date 836

No. 2.

DICK WHITTINGTON

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
41 & 43 MADDOX STREET, BOND STREET, W.

[*All rights reserved*]

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

DICK WHITTINGTON

CHAPTER I

THE CAT AND THE COOK

A VERY long time ago there lived a boy whose name was Richard Whittington. His home was in a little village far away from London. And when he left school, he wanted to find some work which he could do. For he did not like to be idle. But in that little village there was not much work for a boy like Dick.

So, when his father died, he said :

"I should like to go to London, and make some money. For I hear that it is a very rich place, and I think I could get plenty of work there."

"Oh, London is a big place," said Dick's friends, "and you are so young. What will you do, so far from home? Do not go, dear little Dick. Stay here with those who love you."

But Dick shook his head.

"I cannot be idle," he said. "I do want to make some money, and they say the streets of London are full of gold."

He was only thirteen years old. And he was not a very big boy for his age. But when he said a thing, he meant to do it. And so, when no one was about, and the house was quiet, he thought he would run away to London.

First, he took a thick stick. Then he found a large red handkerchief. In this he tied a nice loaf of bread, some butter, and a piece of cheese. Then, with this bundle in one hand, and the thick stick in the other hand, he set off on his journey.

But he had not gone far when he heard something mewing behind him. And as he was rather a kind boy, he stopped. There, at his feet, was a big grey cat, and it was mewing loudly, for it liked Dick very much. He was always ready to stroke its fur, and to speak to it. But to-day he was just going past without saying a word. And the Cat was vexed.

"You might have told me where you were going," it said; and Dick, who knew the Cat's way of talking, said he was sorry.

"I did not tell anyone about it," he said. "For I do not want my friends to know."

"Still, I am your Cat," said Pussy, "and I may be able to help you."

Then Dick began to laugh as he rubbed the Cat's head.

"Poor Pussy!" said he. "What can a Cat do? I am going a long, long way, and you will be very tired."

"Wait and see," said the Cat. "Only, take me with you."

So, as Dick loved the Cat very much, he said he could go with him.

On they went for many and many a mile, and while the sun shone it was very nice. But after a time Dick and his Cat were tired. So they sat down, on a log by the roadside, to rest. Then Dick thought of what he was going to do when he came to London.

"We shall be quite well off," he said to the Cat. "I shall always have shillings and pennies in my pocket. For I mean to work very hard. And I shall buy nice things for you to eat, dear Puss-Cat."

Then the Cat stood up and gave a loud meow, as much as to say he was ready to go on again.

All day Dick and his Cat walked, and rested, and ate the bread and cheese which he had brought with him. When it was dark, Dick knocked at the door of a farm-house, and asked

for shelter. The farmer's wife opened the door a little way, and peeped out to see who had knocked. But when she saw Dick and his Cat she smiled.

"Come in, dear boy, and sit by the fire," she said. "There is room for you and for your cat; and you do look so tired." Then she went to the cupboard, and brought out a bowl of milk, and some fresh bread for Dick, and there was also a basin of new milk for the Cat. While Dick ate his supper by the fire, the farmer's wife asked why he was going such a long way.

"You are too young to go so far," she said. "And London is a very big place. You will be lost in it."

But Dick shook his head.

"There is always room for some one who likes work," he said.

Then the kind woman felt sorry for him. "You must stop here for the night, and I will see that you have a nice bed," she said. "Your cat shall sleep in a basket of soft hay, where he will be very warm."

In the morning, when the sun was bright, Dick arose, and had a bathe in the river, just outside the house, for he was a very clean boy. When he came back, the farmer's wife had some more nice bread and milk for him, and for his cat.

"Thank you, kind lady," said Dick, for he had really very pretty manners. When he had eaten his breakfast, he took his stick, and said "Thank you," once more, before he set off on his walk to London.

He had still a good way to go, but at last he came to the City. It was not so large then as it is now. But it seemed very big to the little boy from the country, and at first Dick did not like the noise of the streets.

He looked about him as he went, and he asked all the people whom he met if they knew where a man lived who was called Hugh Fitz-Warren. For Hugh Fitz-Warren and Dick's father had been old friends.

Now Mr. Fitz-Warren had a large shop in the City. Here he sold gloves, and clothes, and pretty stuffs for frocks. Dick soon found the shop.

It was a fine place. For Hugh Fitz-Warren was quite well off, and he liked a nice house. He lived above the shop, as many people did in those days, and he had a pretty daughter named Alice, whom he loved very much. There were also some old servants, who did as they pleased in the merchant's house.

There were big doors to Mr. Fitz-Warren's shop. Dick pushed them open, and went in. But he seemed very small in this large place:

and Mr. Fitz-Warren only saw him when he looked over the top of his desk. "Hullo, little boy, and who are you?" he asked; for he was rather a kindly old man.

"I have come from the country, Sir," said Dick, "and I want to find some work in London. I think you knew my father quite well, and I hope, for his sake, that you will give me something to do."

"H'm, h'm," said the old man. "What can a boy like you do? And I see you have brought a Cat with you. What can I do with a Cat?"

"He is very good, Sir, and he will catch all the mice in this house."

"Dear me," said Mr. Fitz-Warren. "And I heard the Cook say we have so many mice. They eat all the cakes, and make holes in the tarts. I think she wants a Cat. Very likely she wants a boy, too. So you can go and see her. But, mind, you must do everything that she tells you, and you must not be naughty or rude."

"Oh no, Sir. I am never rude. And I will try not to be naughty. Thank you so much for giving me something to do in your house." So Dick went into the kitchen of Mr. Fitz-Warren's house. It was a big room, and there were a great many shining pots and pans on the shelf above the fireplace. Everything

looked bright and clean. And by the fire there stood the Cook.

She was rather an old woman. She wore a large white apron, and a white cap with frills and strings. But she looked very cross when she saw Dick, for boys, said she, had been the "plague of her life."

"And now the Master has sent me another boy," she said. "The last one broke the best china cups, and spoilt the knives. He was always so careless. Most likely you will be just like him."

"No indeed," said poor Dick. "If you will only try me, I shall be very good. I have come such a long way to make my fortune."

"Tut, tut! You will not do that here," said the Cook. "You will have hard work. But you will also have good food. That is all you need hope to get, for your wages will be small. Stop! What is that behind you?"

"It is my Cat."

"Cat indeed! And who, do you think, wants Cats?"

"But he can catch mice," said Dick, who was now very much afraid that he would be sent away.

The Cook put on her spectacles, and looked at the Cat.

"If he can catch mice," she said slowly, he

can stay. And you can stay, too. But I tell you, I shall make you work."

So Dick put his stick and his bundle in a corner of the big kitchen, and sat down until the Cook wanted him. And the Cat went round the dresser into a cupboard, where she soon found a whole family of mice.

"That is a clever Cat," said the Cook, and she gave him a fine piece of fish for his supper. So the Cat was happy. He stretched himself out before the fire, and slept. For he liked praise, and he also liked nice things to eat.

But poor Dick did not do so well. He was often in trouble. For sometimes he broke a cup, and though he was always sorry, the Cook was very angry. She gave him many sharp blows, and scolded him a great deal.

"I do not like boys," she said. And Dick knew that she told the truth. So these were not happy days for the country boy, and he began to think London was not a very nice place after all. For the Cook took care to give him plenty to do. She would not let him be idle for a minute.

"Do not sit still," she said. "Why are you warming your hands? Get something to do, and that will soon warm you. What! Are you sleepy? Dear me! You soon get tired. Boys should never be tired. They should be

able to work all day long. But I fear you are lazy, and I do not care for lazy people."

She scolded from morning to night. Her voice went on all day, and Dick felt very sad.

"I never do right," he said. "And I cannot please her, no matter what I do."

Just then, the Cat seemed his greatest friend, and he often put his arms round him and cried.

But one day, as he was busy, his Master's daughter, Alice, came into the kitchen. She smiled when she saw Dick, who took off his cap.

"What a nice boy this is!" she said to the Cook, "and what pretty manners he has!"

"H'm," said the Cook. "I do not like boys, and I do not care for him. I have to run round after him all the day long."

"But what a dear Cat he has!" said Alice, who did not mind what the Cook said.

"Oh, the Cat is good! She catches mice" said the Cook.

"A dear Cat!" said Alice as she stroked its fur. "I think that boy might do things for me."

"No, no, Miss Alice. I can look after him when he is in the kitchen," said the Cook. "But if he goes upstairs, I shall not be able to see what he does. Now, run away, like a good

girl. For I am going to make some cakes, and I cannot have you here."

So Alice went away, but she did not forget Dick.

CHAPTER II

BOW BELLS

Now and then Alice brought Dick some pieces of cake. It was nice plum cake, which the Cook made, and Dick liked it very much. Sometimes Alice slipped an apple-tart into Dick's hand.

But when the Cook saw this, she was cross. "I do not make apple-tarts for kitchen-lads," she said. "You are Miss Alice, and you should not speak to Dick, or give him such things. I shall tell your father about you."

But she really was fond of Alice. So she did not speak to Mr. Fitz-Warren. But she was a little more cross with poor Dick. One day, when the Cook had been very angry, poor Dick felt he could not bear it any more. So, when night came, he sat on his bed, and put his arms round the Cat, and told him all about it.

"Puss dear, I think we must really run away from this house. For we are not wanted

here. I get into trouble, and the Cook has such a bad temper."

"But do not leave me when you go," said the Cat.

"Oh no! I will not do that. You must go with me, and we will leave as soon as we can."

So, one night, when it was getting dark, Dick and the Cat left the house. They went very quietly, so that no one should hear them, and they walked a long, long way. For Dick wished to go back to the little village where he had once lived.

But soon they were very tired, and the poor Cat kept mewing, as if to say:

"Please go back to London, for Alice was always good to me, and I am so hungry."

"My dear Puss-Cat," said Dick, "I am very sorry for you. But you know how badly that Cook treated me. She was not at all kind. And I am just as poor as ever. I have not made any money, and I begin to fear there are many poor people in the City. But if you are tired we will rest, for my feet ache, too."

So when they came to a big tree, they sat down under its branches. The Cat washed its face, for it was dusty. Then it curled itself up and went to sleep, for the night was very warm.

Dick also shut his eyes, and his heart was very sad.

"What shall I do?" he thought. "I must look for some other work. And I have so few friends to help me."

He fell asleep as he was thinking. He dreamt of kind fairies, who smiled at him, and told him not to be sad any more. Fairies cannot do much to help people. But Dick was glad to see them in his dreams. For they made him forget how lonely he was.

He woke quite early on the next morning, But the sun was shining brightly. And as Dick sat up, he heard the sound of bells. They were the bells of Bow Church, which he knew well (for Bow Church was near Mr. Fitz-Warren's house), and the bells were ringing very sweetly.

Dick listened to them for some time. It seemed to him that he heard voices singing with the bells, and they sang words which he could easily hear. Strange to say, they were singing about him.

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

rang the bells, and Dick rubbed his eyes, and thought he must be dreaming once more.

But the bells of Bow Church went on. And he heard the words quite clearly :

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

"Dear me, am I asleep?" said Dick. And he pinched his arm to see if he were awake or not. "What are those bells saying—'Lord Mayor of London'? Why, the Lord Mayor is a very great man. He rides in a golden carriage, and he wears a beautiful coat and a fine gold chain. But I am only a poor boy, who has to work for his bread. How can I ever be the Lord Mayor of London?"

The Cat woke up in a hurry, and gave a loud mew, and Dick laughed to hear him.

"Do you think it will ever come true, Pussy?" he said. And again the Cat said "Meow," still more loudly.

"Well, Puss-Cat," said Dick, "if I am to be Lord Mayor, we must go back. I can never be the Lord Mayor if I run away from London. So we will walk home to Mr. Fitz-Warren's shop, and see if he will take us in. And I must try and make that Cook like me."

So he took his stick, and the Cat ran on in front, for he was glad to hear they were not going away from pretty, kind Miss Alice. And

as Dick and his Cat went along, the bells of Bow Church kept ringing:

'Ding-dong, ding-dong:
Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London."

As Dick heard them, he lifted his head.

"I will make my way in the world," he said. "Just now I have only one sixpence in my pocket and my dear Cat. But I mean to try hard, and we shall see if what the bells say does not come true."

So, when they came to Mr. Fitz-Warren's shop, they went straight in at the front door. And there was Mr. Fitz-Warren looking down the road, as if he waited for some one.

"Oh, Dick!" he said, "I was just asking for you, and no one knew where you were. But I am glad to see you at home once more, so come in, my boy, come in; and do not run away again."

"I will try to do what I am told, Sir," cried Dick.

"That is right, and I think you will find Cook will be kinder to you. Do not vex her, dear boy—do not vex her."

So Dick returned to the kitchen and went on with his work, just as if he had never gone away. Perhaps the Cook had missed him a

little, for she did not scold him quite so much, and Alice was very glad to see him again.

"Oh, Dick, I am so pleased that you have come back!" she said, as she ran into the kitchen. "See, I have brought you such a nice apple-cake. It is quite fresh, and I know you will like it. And here is a jug of milk for the Cat. He must be so thirsty after his long walk."

She poured the milk into a basin, and the Cat drank it. Poor Puss-Cat showed how glad he was to be with Alice. For when the milk was done, he rubbed his head on her frock, and he purred loudly to say "Thank you."

Alice smiled as she looked at him.

"I think he likes me very much," she said. "He is such a good Cat."

As Alice was talking, she sat down in an arm-chair near the fire. The Cat at once jumped on her knee.

"See how happy he is!" said Alice. "He is pleased to be at home."

Even the Cook was glad to have the Cat back.

"I believe those horrid mice knew that he was not at home," she said. "They made such a noise last night. They kept me awake."

So, for the Cat's sake, she was really more kind to Dick.

But, in the evening, when Dick's work was done, he told Alice how he had heard the bells ringing.

"And," said Dick, "they went on saying:

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

So I turned. And we shall see if I am ever really the Lord Mayor."

"I am sure you will be a very nice Lord Mayor," said Alice. "But it will take a long, long time."

"Yes," said Dick. "It will be a long while before I am really grown up, and I cannot be the Lord Mayor till then."

Both the boy and girl looked sad, for just now Dick was such a poor boy; and he was so young.

"But I am brave," said Dick after a time. "And I do not mean to be always a servant."

"No," said Alice, as she nodded her head. "You will be rich some day, like my father, and people will say you are a kind, good man. Then perhaps the King will make you one of his knights, and then, dear Dick, you may really be the Lord Mayor of London."

"And when I am the Lord Mayor I will

marry you," said Dick, who was now feeling quite full of joy.

Just then the Cook came by.

"Here, Dick," said she, "why are you so idle? Miss Alice is your Master's child, and you are just a kitchen-lad. You must not talk so much to her. How many times am I to say this to you?"

Then Dick went quietly into the back-kitchen, and washed the dishes. For he knew it was of no use to dream of being the Lord Mayor when he had this work to do.

"I quite forgot that I was only a kitchen-lad," said he to himself. "But some day I shall be rich, for Alice said so, and some day I shall rise in the world. For the bells of Bow Church keep on saying what I am going to be."

CHAPTER III

THE CAT AND THE CAPTAIN

Now one day, as Mr. Fitz-Warren sat in his shop, the Captain of a ship came in.

"Good-morning, Sir!" he said. "I am going to sail very soon. I came to ask if you have any cloth, or linen, which you would like

me to sell for you in the country to which I am going."

"Yes, I have," said Mr. Fitz-Warren. "I have a great many things that you can take, and if any of my servants wish to send some things I shall be very glad. You know, I think it is right to let them make a little money if I can."

"That is very good of you," said the Captain. "And I should like to see what they wish me to take."

Then Mr. Fitz-Warren called all the servants.

"The Captain of my ship has something to say to you," he told them. "So you must listen to him."

"Yes," said the Captain. "I am going to a land which is very far away. And I shall carry goods for your Master. But he gives each of you leave to send something of your own. I promise to sell your things and to bring you the money."

"Just listen to that," said the Cook to the Maid.

"The land to which I am going is a very fine place. Gold and silver are found there, and many beautiful stones, which shine like the King's Crown."

"Can you bring us some stones like those?" asked the Maid.

"Yes, if you give me a few pretty ribbons, or lace, which the Queen of that land will like."

"I have some ribbons," said the Cook; "and I have lace as well."

"And I have nice new clothes," said the Maid. "I made them for myself; but if you can bring back gold for them, I shall be able to buy more stuff and make others by and by."

"Gold will buy you plenty of such things," said the Captain. "But what has this boy to send?"

"I have nothing but a Cat."

"A Cat! Why, what a strange thing! I hope you will let me have him, for there are many rats on board the ship."

"I do not think I can spare poor Puss-Cat," said Dick, who looked as if he would cry.

"But only think!" said Alice. "If he is sold, he may bring you plenty of money."

"I cannot part with him," said Dick.

But now the Cat went near the Captain and rubbed his head on his hand.

"He likes me," said the Captain. "He knows I will be his friend."

"He loves me," said Dick, as he put his arms round the Cat.

"Yes, he loves you, and he wants to be kind

to you and to help you," said Alice. "Do let him go, dear Dick."

"Here is a fine noise, all about a Cat!" said the Cook to the Maid. "And just hear the creature! Take it away and lock it in the stick-cupboard."

But the Captain heard what she said.

"Do not touch that Cat!" he cried. "I must talk to the boy about it. Now, my lad, first tell me your name."

"I am Dick Whittington, Sir."

"Oh well, then, Dick, let me take your Cat. I think I know what to do with him. And he will turn out your very best friend in the end. So let him go."

"Will he be happy?" asked Dick, whose eyes were full of tears.

"Happy! Yes, all day long. He will grow fat on my rats, and when he goes to that land over the sea he will be so pleased."

"And perhaps you will have a pocketful of money," said Mr. Fitz-Warren.

"Yes! And you may soon be the Lord Mayor—sooner than you think," said Alice.

"Meow!" said the Cat, who was still near the Captain.

"There! the Cat says he will come. Good-bye, my friends. I have all your things. Mr. Fitz-Warren will send his goods on board. I

shall think of you as we sail along, and I shall bring you home many nice things. So look out for me."

He shook hands with everybody and went off, and the Cat went by his side.

"Look at him," said Alice, as she took Dick's hand.

But poor Dick was too sad to look. He put his head on his hands ; and Alice tried hard to comfort him.

Every day, when he thought of his dear Cat, he felt so dull.

"Dear me! we do miss that Cat of yours," said the Cook. "Why did you send him on the ship? He was of far more use than you, for see how he caught the mice. Since he went away, I can keep no tarts or cakes in the cupboards. The mice eat every one of them as fast as I put them on the shelves, and I do not know what to do. It was very wrong of you to let the Captain have the one thing that I wanted."

"Why, you said the Cat stole, too," said the Maid, who was standing near.

"Who stole? Not the Cat. I never said such a thing."

"Well, the Cat is miles and miles away, and who can tell when the ship will come home again?"

"Now, there you go," said the Cook, who was rather cross that day. "You always look at the dull side of everything. For my part, I hope to see the Captain very soon."

"And I think he will be a long time in that far-off land," said the Maid.

This was too much for the Cook.

"Then what am I to do about the mice? I shall never have any cakes fit for Miss Alice to eat."

"You can get another Cat, to be sure. Anyone would think there was only one Cat in the world."

"I just want that one," said the Cook.

And because it was Dick's Cat that had gone, she was a little more friendly to the boy.

CHAPTER IV

THE RATS OF BARBARY

THE ship sailed fast over the sea, for it was a very good ship, built of strong wood. And it had three tall masts, with a great many white sails.

The sailors sang when they were at work, and they seemed very happy on the sea. In the evenings they sat on the deck, and talked

about the land to which they were going. The cat sat near them, and that was how he knew so much about that country.

The sailors were very kind to the Cat, and they took great care of him. They did not like to see him run up the ropes, for fear he should fall into the sea. But the Cat did not mean to fall. And he only went up to get a good look round.

"These men seem to think I am a baby," said the Cat. "Indeed, I am a clever Cat, and I know what I can do. I am wiser than some people, too, for I also know what I cannot do, and it is not every one who knows that."

So he came down from the ropes, and he washed his face with his paws. Then he went to sleep in the sunshine. "This is grand," said the Cat. "I love to be warm, and to feel the sun on my fur." So he curled his tail round his feet, hid his head, and went fast asleep.

In his sleep he dreamt he had come to a very lovely land, where he was treated like a little Prince. This dream pleased him so much that he laughed in his sleep, and his little feet went as if he were running.

The next day, the Cat heard the sailors say they would soon be near a country called Barbary. The Cat lifted his head crossly at such a long word.

"What a name to give to any nice country!" he said. "I shall never think of it again. But I shall not mind that if it is a nice place, and when I get there, I must see what I can do to help poor Dick."

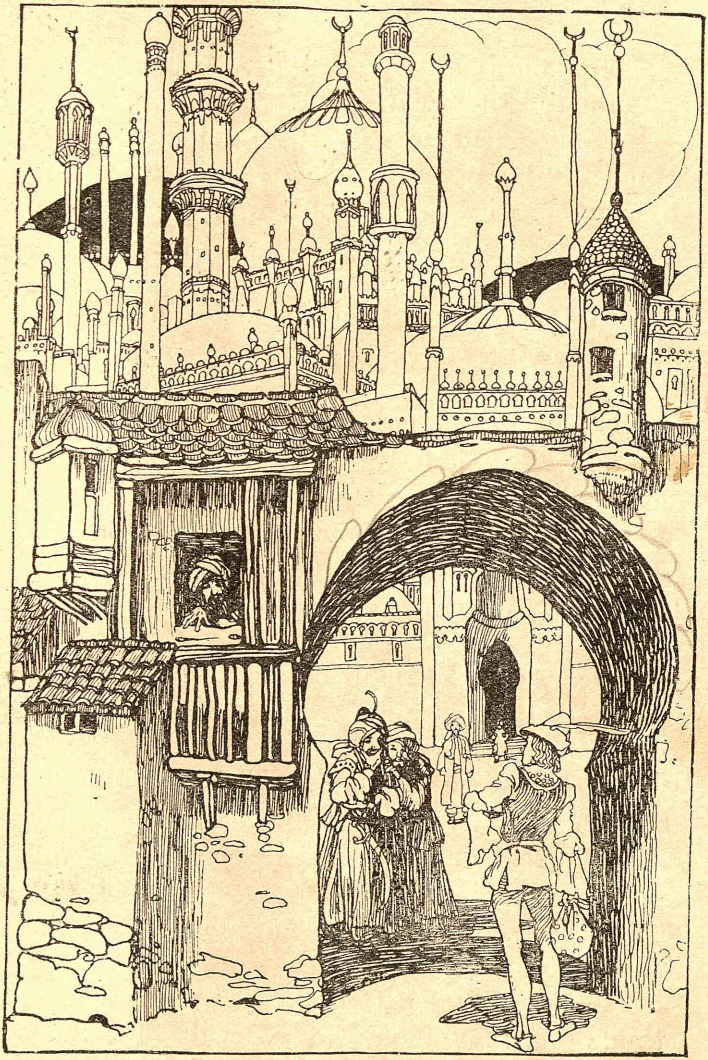
So when he saw the men washing their clothes, he washed his fur again. Then he rubbed his head over, and combed out his whiskers with his claws. For the Cat said: "I must look smart when I go on shore."

Then the sailors put out their flags—red, white, and blue. They cleaned the decks, and made all the brass shine. And so they came to the land of Barbary. The Captain put on his best coat, one that had big gold buttons. He wore a new hat and his clean gloves. Then he stepped into a little boat, and a sailor rowed him to the shore.

Now, the King and Queen of Barbary lived in a palace near the sea. It was a grand place. And the rooms were large and high. The King was dressed in a splendid coat. He wore a big star of bright stones, and many jewels.

The Queen wore a lovely white gown. She had a crown on her head and a fan in her hand. She thought she looked very nice.

But when the Captain came into the room



THE CAPTAIN GOING INTO THE KING OF BARBARY'S PALACE.

he found both the King and the Queen were standing on their chairs.

"We are glad to see you, Captain," said the King. "But we cannot get down to speak to you. I am really afraid even to sit on my throne."

"But what is the matter?" asked the Captain. For he had never seen a King and Queen standing on chairs, and he thought they looked very funny.

"Oh, it is quite dreadful!" said the King. "We have so many rats in the palace that we do not know what to do. They eat all our bread. They steal the flour. They make holes in the cheese. I think they go to sleep in our beds, and I am sure they will bite us some night."

"Dear, dear! This is sad,' said the Captain. "But why do you not get rid of them?"

"How can we do that? They are all over the land. They find their way into everybody's house, and we hear that they have even eaten the children's toys. If you can tell us how to drive them out of our country, we will thank you very much."

"Ah," said the Captain. "Well, let me think. If I can do anything, I will. For I am a great friend of yours, am I not?"

"Indeed you are!" replied the King warmly.

"I have brought some pretty things to show you. There are ribbons and lace, and new dresses which will please the Queen."

"Ah, how I shall love to see them!" said the Queen. "But how can I look at anything till we get rid of the rats?"

"There are also," said the Captain, "great bundles of cloth and linen from my friend Mr. Fitz-Warren, which the King will be glad to buy."

"Yes, yes!" said the King. "Of course, I shall buy what you have brought. But I cannot look at them until the rats go away."

"Do the rats stop everything?" asked the Captain.

"I fear they do. You do not know how many there are. We have black rats, and brown rats, and grey rats, and I really think I have even seen white rats in my best bedroom."

"This is sad," said the Captain. "But when we see a rat in England we kill it at once."

"My dear Captain, that is just what we wish to do."

"We get a dog."

"Oh, we have no dogs."

"Or a cat."

"We have no cats."

"Or a trap, if there are no dogs or cats."

"We have no traps."

"But," said the poor Queen, who was shaking all over, for she had seen three grey rats at that moment, "if you can show us a way to kill them, we will give you a present."

"My dear," said the King in a hurry, "what shall we give him for this kindness?"

"Anything," said the Queen.

"Everything," said the Chief Men of the Court, who had tucked up their legs on the couch.

"Say that he shall have a bag full of money," said the Queen.

"Give him a cartful, if you like," said the Chief Men.

"Give him his ship full of gold," said a small Prince, who had just come in.

"Stop, stop," said the Captain, holding up his hand. "You talk all at once, and I cannot hear you. Let the King speak first, if you please, and then I will hear the rest—one at a time."

So the King coughed a little, just to show that he knew how great he was.

"It is my duty to speak first," he said. "Now, Captain, we have told you about the rats. And if you can really help us, we will give you as much gold as you can carry."

"Where?" said the Captain. For he thought the King was rather mean.

"In your pocket, of course," said the King, after another little cough.

"Tut, tut!" said the Captain. "I will bring you something that will run after your rats. It will catch them. It will kill them. It will drive them away. You shall have your bread and your flour. You shall sleep in your own beds, and you shall sit on your own chairs. But I want a great deal of gold for this thing."

"You shall have it," said the Queen, who was not at all mean. "I will give you a shipful of gold."

"That is too much," said the King. But every one else made such a noise that nobody heard him.

"If you give me a shipful of gold, I will drive away the rats," said the Captain.

And when he said this, all the people held out their hands.

"Oh, Captain dear, do help us," they cried. "We want your help so much."

"Very well," said the Captain. "Sit down quietly, and wait. Never mind what the rats do now. I must go back to the ship."

"But when will you come again?" cried the little Prince.

"I shall not be very long," said the Captain.

"And what will you bring?"

"Ah, my dear Prince, you must wait and see. I do not think you have ever seen such a thing in your life."

"I will send a hundred of my soldiers to bring that great Thing," said the King, who was trying to be very grand.

"No, no. I do not want any soldiers. It will come with me in a few minutes. But no one must make a noise, even when a rat shows its face."

"Oh!" said the Queen. For just then three big fat rats came tumbling out of a bookcase, where they had been eating all the King's best books, and they looked quite puffed out with so much learning.

"I must be brave," said the Queen, "and as the Captain says we must not make a noise, I will try not to look at the rats."

So she held the back of her high chair. And she shut her eyes, and so she did not see what the rats were doing.

The King shut his eyes, too, and he sat down and went to sleep. For the poor King was very tired.

But the little Prince sat on the table with his feet under him, and as he had a pocket full of hard peas, he threw them at the rats.

CHAPTER V

THE CAT AND THE RATS

THE Captain laughed as he went back to his ship.

"I have made Dick's fortune," said he. "He will be a very rich man. And now he can be the Lord Mayor as soon as he likes. Ha, ha! I said I would be kind to him. And I am. Ha, ha!"

The sailors touched their caps as the Captain came on board.

"We are just going on shore, Sir," they said. "But what are we to do with the Cat? He wants to come with us."

"Oh, where is he?" asked the Captain. "I am going to take him to the palace, for no one here has ever yet seen a Cat."

"Well, he looks very fine, Sir."

"Then, where is he? Here, Puss-Cat!"

"Meow! meow!" said the Cat, who came running from the cabin.

"You are to go on shore with me," said the Captain.

"Meow! meow!" said the Cat.

"And mind you are a good Cat, for the King and Queen wish to see you."

The Cat gave his soft paws a lick, and then

he rubbed his face once more. Then he went down the ladder after the Captain, and they both stepped into the boat.

As they walked to the palace, all the people came out of their houses to look at the strange creature. The King and Queen stared at the Cat as it went into their room.

"Here we are," said the Captain: "This is the bold Cat, which will catch all your rats."

"What a fine animal it is!" said the King.

"But I am so afraid of it," said the Queen.

"What green eyes it has!" said the little Prince.

"And what a long tail!" said the Chief Men. "It looks like a small tiger."

"Perhaps it will bite us," said the Queen.

But the Cat did not even look at her. All at once it saw a big grey rat under a chair. And then, how the Cat ran! It soon killed that rat. But now its work had begun. It flew round the room, and the rats ran before it. The Cat was too quick for them, and they fell down under it.

On all sides there were dead rats. And the live rats squealed as they tried to see which could get first into their holes.

"How fierce the Cat is!" said the Queen, who shut her eyes when the Cat ran after a

rat. But the King came down off his chair, and put his hand on the Cat's head.

"This is a brave fellow," he said. "And I am very glad we have bought him. He shall live in the best bedroom of the palace. He shall eat just what he likes, and a servant shall bring him new milk when he is thirsty."

"He is a kind Cat," said the little Prince, who had been patting the Cat's back. "He likes to be stroked."

"But what sharp claws he has!" said the Chief Men, who always spoke together, as if they were in a hurry.

"Ah, do not touch his claws," said the Captain, "for he may scratch you." The Chief Men were so afraid of being hurt that they quickly drew back their hands.

"If you are good to him, he will be good to you; and if you do not hurt him, he will not harm you. For he knows who are his friends."

"Then he will soon know us," said the Chief Men.

A noise at the door made them start, and some of them thought the rats were coming back. But it was only the palace Cook, in her white apron.

"Now, if it pleases the King and Queen, dinner is ready," she said.

"Dinner!" cried the Queen. "Oh, how glad I am! Then the rats have really left us something to eat after all?"

"Yes. I have made a pie and a nice plum-pudding, and there are four jam-tarts."

"Only four!" said the Chief Men.

"Be thankful you have them," said the King. "I will taste those tarts myself, and see if they are good."

"He means to eat them all," said the Chief Men very softly.

"The Cat loves jam-tarts," said the Captain. "And he can easily eat four at a time. Can you not, Puss-Cat?"

"Meow! meow!" said the Cat, as he licked his paws again.

"I fear he is a greedy Cat," said one of the Chief Men. But he did not say it loudly because he was rather afraid of the Cat. But the King and Queen were so happy, that they did not care what the Cat ate.

"He shall wear a gold collar," said the King.

"And his name shall be on it in pretty stones," said the Queen.

The Cat liked to be petted and praised. So he was happy, too.

"I am glad to live in a house again," he said; "for I never cared for the ship or for the sea. I do not like to be tossed about. And I think

I am more fit for a palace than for any other place."

So he rubbed up his fur, and he washed his face, and every one said:

"What a beautiful Cat he is!"

This made him very proud.

"I am as great as the King," he thought. "See how happy every one is now that I have come."

He lay down to sleep on the best bed, in the best bedroom, where the sun shone all day long.

"Do you wish to go back to London with me, Puss-Cat?" said the Captain.

"No, no," said the Cat. "It is too far away, and London is a cold place. Here it is always warm. And the people think so much of me."

"And what shall I say to Dick?"

"I came for Dick's sake, and you are taking him a ship full of gold instead of me. So give Dick my love, and say I hope he will soon be the Lord Mayor, and marry Miss Alice."

"And you will stay where you are?" asked the Captain.

But the Cat had curled himself up like a ball of fur, and he was fast asleep. So the Captain went alone to his ship.

CHAPTER VI

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

ONE day there was a great stir in Mr. Fitz-Warren's house. Letters had come from the Captain, and every one wanted to know what he had written.

"Do you think he has sold the Cat?" said Alice.

But Dick shook his head. He was always sorry that he had let his dear Cat go.

"And has the Queen bought my ribbons and lace?" said the Cook. "They were such pretty ribbons!"

But all Mr. Fitz-Warren could tell them was that the ship was coming home. The Captain would then be able to tell them what he had done with the things.

"Please make a big cake," said Alice to the Cook. "And let us have plenty of pies. For the Captain always likes what you make."

"And so do other people," said the Cook. "I cannot keep a cake in the cupboard."

"Well, you make them to be eaten, do you not?" said Alice. And she smiled so sweetly that the Cook said:

"Yes, they are made for you, Miss Alice.

So I need not mind if you take them. But I know you give them away."

And she held up her finger at Alice, who laughed and ran off.

The next morning they were up very early. For every one wanted to see the Captain when he came. They wished to hear what he had seen and done in that land beyond the seas.

Dick felt he really could not work, and, for once, he was idle. Alice kept running to look out of the windows. The Maid was up and down the stairs six times in an hour, which made everybody cross with her.

The Cook was the only one who was busy. And she made pies, and tarts, and cakes, till there was no room for any more in the cupboards.

At last Mr. Fitz-Warren went out of the front door, and as he waited on the steps, there was the Captain, coming down the street. He looked brown, and his clothes were old. But he smiled happily when he saw his friend. Mr. Fitz-Warren went quickly to meet him.

"Welcome home, Captain," he said, as they shook hands. "Have you good news for us, and is the old ship safely in port?"

"Yes, the ship is all right. And I have very good news. But everybody must come and hear it."

"And did you bring all your men home once more?"

"Yes, all the men have come back. They have brought some fine things with them, which they are taking to their wives and children."

So saying, they went into Mr. Fitz-Warren's room. Alice was sent to call the servants, so that they, also, could hear the joyful news.

"Be quick! be quick!" cried Alice, as she flew into the kitchen. "Do not stop to do anything. For the Captain is here, and he wishes to see every one of you."

"Dear, dear! my hands have flour on them," said the Cook. "I have worked while others played."

"Oh, do not wait to wash them," said Alice. "Flour wipes off so quickly. Only do come soon."

"You need not go, Dick," said the Cook, as she looked at the boy. "I want the plates dusted, for the Captain will stay to dinner, I am sure. But there! He is off while I speak. And what am I to do with him, and the plates, and—— Yes, yes, Miss Alice, I I am coming. Oh, what a house this is!"

"Oh, do not be cross, dear Cook," said Alice, who wanted every one to be happy that day. "Dick wants to hear about his Cat, for you

know how he loved him," said Alice, as she went upstairs again. But the Cook was cross, so she did not speak.

"I think the Captain will have something to say to me," said the Maid, tossing her head. "Perhaps I shall not need to work any more."

"Tut, tut!" said the Cook, who heard her words. "Work never hurt anybody yet, so you need not talk like that. Just be thankful that you are in such a good house."

But they were all quite quiet when they came to the room, where Mr. Fitz-Warren and the Captain were sitting. The Cook stood first, for she was so tall and big. And the Maid was near her, but she looked very shy. Alice and Dick were close to Mr. Fitz-Warren, who was seated at the head of the table.

On this table there were a great many parcels. And the Captain kept his hand on them.

Then, when every one was in the room, the door was shut, and the Captain began to say what he had done.

"We had a grand voyage," he said. "Nobody was ill. The sun was bright. And there were no rough winds. So we sailed along very pleasantly, and one fine day we reached the land of Barbary. But it is a long way off.

"Now, as you know, I had taken the things you gave me, and I sold them, as I said I would. The Queen bought your ribbons and lace, Cook. And she gave a good price for them. Here is your money in gold, and if you have some more ribbons and lace, I will take them next time I go."

He gave the Cook a large parcel from the table, and, for a wonder, she smiled and laughed like anybody else.

Then the Captain saw the Maid.

"The Princess liked the clothes you sent," he said, "and they fitted her. So she sends you a parcel of bright stones, and some money. You can sell the stones, if you like. And when I next sail for Barbary, I shall be glad to take any other goods for you."

"Thank you, kind Sir," said the Maid. And her cheeks were quite red as she made a curtsy.

"As for your Cat, Dick, he now lives in the palace. He is the Royal Cat, and he has done well. For there is not the tail of a rat to be seen anywhere in the place. The King has paid for him in sacks of gold, and there is a whole ship-load of money for you, my dear Dick."

"Oh, Sir, I thank you!" said Dick. But the tears fell as he spoke, for every one knew how he loved his Cat.

"Dick, dear Dick, you are rich. Your fortune is made. Now you can be anything you like," said Alice, as she danced for joy.

"Do you hear that?" said the Maid, as she touched the Cook's arm. "You will not be able to scold him any more."

"I did it for his good," said the Cook. "If it had not been for me, he would not have turned out such a nice boy."

"Is he really a nice boy, Cook?"

"Well, he hopes he will be some day," said the Cook.

All at once the bells of Bow Church began to ring. They were ringing because every one was so pleased to see the Captain home again.

But Dick thought he still heard the words:

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

He felt quite glad at his good fortune.

"Now, Dick, I am going to take you as my partner," said Mr. Fitz-Warren. "You shall do no more work in the house. But I will treat you as if you were my son. And, in time, you will be one of the great merchants of London."

"And then you will be a knight, and the Lord Mayor of London," said Alice.

"Thank you, Sir; you are very kind," said Dick.

But Mr. Fitz-Warren put his hand on Dick's arm. "What do I hear about the Lord Mayor?" he asked.

"Oh, Sir, it is only a dream," said Dick quickly.

"It is what the bells tell him every day," said Alice.

"There is many a 'true word' spoken in fun," said the Captain. "So let us hope all Dick's dreams will turn out well."

"He must learn to work hard," said the Cook, as she went out of the room.

"If he does right, he is sure to get on," said Mr. Fitz-Warren. "Now, we will have dinner, and the Captain will tell us more about his voyage, and the fine things he has seen. I wish this to be a joyful day in my house."

Then the Cook and the Maid brought out a fine linen cloth, and spread it on the table. On this they placed knives and forks and plates. The Cook brought a big piece of beef from the oven, and the Maid carried the bread.

They had a fine feast. For the Cook had roasted some fowls, and she had boiled a ham. Then there were apple-tarts, and mince-pies, and a great plum-pudding, that made every one think of Christmas.

"There is no place like home," said the Captain, with tears of joy in his eyes.

"Hurrah for dear old England, the land of good cheer!"

"And hurrah for the brave ship that brings us so much gold!" said Mr. Fitz-Warren.

So they were very merry.

But Alice and Dick talked of the dear Cat, and felt rather sad.

"If it had not been for him," said Dick, "I should never have been sitting at this table. Now I am one of your family, Alice. And some day, when I am older, I will ask you to be my dear little wife."

Mr. Fitz-Warren was a kind friend to Dick in the days that came after this. He gave him a share in the shop and in the ships. And when Dick was older he married Alice.

They lived in a fine big house in Hart Street. Sometimes the King of England came to see Dick. In time he was made a knight, and now every one called him "Sir Richard Whittington." For knights are always called "Sir."

The song came true that Bow Bells had sung so often, for three times Sir Richard Whittington was made Lord Mayor of London. And a very good Lord Mayor he was, too.

He was also a kind man. And he took care

to help poor boys who had no friends. For he did not forget how poor he had once been himself.

In Whittington's days coal was first taken from Newcastle-on-Tyne to London, and it was carried in a boat called a "cat," or "ketch." Dick had a great many of these boats. They brought him a good sum of money every year.

Dick lived to be an old man, and he was very happy with his dear wife, Alice. When he died, a stone was placed over him, and on it were the words:

"Beneath this stone lies Whittington,
Sir Richard rightly named.
Who three times was Lord Mayor of London,
In which he ne'er was blamed.
He rose from poverty to wealth,
By industry and that,
For lo! he scorned to gain by stealth
What he got by a Cat."

The stone over Dick Whittington's grave was broken in the Great Fire of London. But no one ever forgets Dick, and the story of his Cat is dear to every little boy and girl who reads about him to-day.

THE END



436