



DEAN & MUNDAY.



TORTOISESHELL KITTEN.

Price 3d.



THE
TORTOISESHELL KITTEN;

OR, THE
ADVENTURES OF PUSS FOR THREE MONTHS.

WITH A FINE FRONTISPIECE.



LONDON:
DEAN AND MUNDAY, THREADNEEDLE-STREET.

Atkinson
Nov. 27/25

FOR TONKESHILL KITTEN

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF PUPS FOR THREE MONTHS

LONDON

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE PUPPETS'

THE

TORTOISESHELL KITTEN.

ONE dark winter's evening, George and Charles, and two of their cousins, were amusing themselves by playing at forfeits. In the midst of the game they were startled by something rattling against the casement. George instantly opened the window, and let in a poor cat, half starved, and benumbed with the cold.

To his great surprise he found out that it was his own tortoiseshell-kitten, that had been lost three months ago,

and which it had been thought, was worried to death by dogs.

He was astonished at seeing her again, and ran to his father to ask how she could have supported herself, and been protected from the cold for so long a time.

His father promised to tell him the next evening; and told him to take poor puss into the kitchen, and see that she was properly taken care of.

George was surprised on going into the study on the following day to see puss sitting in a chair before his desk; for he always put it away when he had done with it.

Puss left the room; and George began

to put the desk in its place; when he saw a parcel he did not remember to have put there; immediately took it to his father, who desired him in the evening to read its contents, which were as follows:—

**THE ADVENTURES OF MYSELF, THE
TORTOISESHELL KITTEN.**

My dear young Master,
With my parentage and education till within the last three months you are well acquainted; since I was bred in this house, and was reared under your own inspection: but as I heard you the evening I returned express a wish that you were acquainted with the places that I

visited, and the adventures that I passed through, during my absence; you will not be displeased by my endeavours to gratify your curiosity. George looked at Puss, who was laid quietly before the fire.

One fine October morning I wandered to some distance from home, prowling about the hedges in search of mice and birds, when, beneath a stack of corn, where I had promised myself a plentiful share of plunder, I saw the hoop of a barrel laid. It was crossed, in various places, with strings curiously looped and twisted. These I did not then observe, my attention being arrested by several birds which I thought were busy pecking

the corn that lay scattered around. Instantly determining to make one of them my prey, I crept behind a little bush, made a spring upon a luckless sparrow, and, in the same instant, found myself entangled in the strings, which I now discovered to be snares for birds. In the same predicament with myself were two tom-tits, and three sparrows; but I was much too frightened to molest them, and after struggling, in vain, to escape, I was compelled to resign myself to my fate.

After a few hours had elapsed, a troop of school-boys came running up. The moment that they saw me, they set up a shout of laughter and exultation. The

biggest of them instantly seized me, and claimed me as his share of the spoil: the others submitting with much murmuring and many discontented looks, divided the birds among themselves, though my new master would have a share of these also; and when one of the boys attempted to dispute the fairness of this proceeding, he silenced him with a blow: yet I afterwards found that his cowardice was equal to his cruelty and oppression, that overbearing as he was where he was master, he was meanly submissive to those who were stronger than himself; and that he sought to over-reach by cunning where he could not succeed by force. He now proposed,

as he termed it, to make some sport. This was to consist in fastening one of the poor birds to a stick, and then in letting me fly at it, but I was much too intent on making my escape to attend to any thing besides; therefore, the moment he let me go, I ran away as fast as I could, pursued by all these cruel boys, who pelted me with stones, till an unlucky hit upon the side stunned me so much that I could run no longer, and I was once more seized and conveyed away in triumph.

As I was recovered by another boy who claimed me as his property, a quarrel ensued, which terminated in blows; and I was relinquished into the hands of

my former possessor; who, considering me as the cause of the dispute, declared that as soon as he should get me home he would have his revenge.

After a short walk, we arrived at a large house, into which my master entered, but the others dispersed in different directions. On entering the yard, Master Dick, for this I now found was his name, inquired for Bob the stable boy, and walked along with him to the stable, where they held a long consultation to determine how they could make the most sport of me. To recount the various wicked schemes that were proposed of getting fun, as Bob called it, out of me, would only serve to disgust

you, who have been brought up in a just abhorrence of all cruelty; suffice it to say, many of them were such as must have proved fatal to me, and the thoughts of which made every hair upon me bristle with terror. At length it was determined to set the great yard dog upon me, that they might see us fight. The dog was loosed; it was an immense mastiff that was chained in the court. It was led into the yard by master Dick, who held it by the collar. On seeing me, it snarled, it growled, and showed its teeth, which in imagination I already felt mangling me, and crushing my bones. I then thought how often I had seized a poor unfortunate mouse, and, in mere

wantonness, played with my captive for an hour together; and I inwardly resolved, that in future, should it be my fortune to escape, I would never keep any animal a single instant in suspense; and, as it is my duty to destroy vermin, that I would put them out of pain as quickly as possible. Master Dick now set the horrible animal upon me, whilst Bob held me in his hands. I instantly turned and bit him with all my strength on the finger, on which he let me go with a dreadful oath. I sprung upon the manger, and from thence into the rack, where I set both dog and Bob at defiance, by striking with my claws between the bars. These two abandoned boys

swore at me in a most horrible manner, and Bob went for a for a fork to displace me with. During this interval of dreadful suspense as to the fate which awaited me, master Dick's sister passed, and by her tears and entreaties endeavoured to persuade him to liberate me, but in vain.

Wicked people, however clever they think themselves, often meet with those who are a match for them in cunning. Thus, what Dick's sister could not obtain by persuasion, she at length effected by the threat of telling his father of his cruelty. This was an argument which there was no resisting, so he held the dog while Bob, who had now returned,

pulled me down, and I scampered across the yard as fast as possible. Master Dick, as I passed him, let go his hold of the dog, pretending that he could not restrain it. It instantly sprang upon me with a tremendous growl, seized me by the back, and shook me violently; but I know not how, it let me turn myself in its mouth sufficiently, to allow me to reach its eyes with my claws. It instantly set up a most dreadful howl, and I took the opportunity of escaping to the roof of the barn.

At this moment, Master Dick's father entered the yard, and, with the most impudent effrontery his son advanced to meet him, and told him a story, every

word of which was false, to account for the dog's being loose, and the battle between the dog and me; the conclusion of which, it was evident that his father must have seen.

Wickedness may go unpunished for some time, and a person may flatter himself that he contrives matters so cunningly as never to be detected. A liar may devise his falsehoods so artfully, that he may feel quite certain they cannot be discovered: but such practices will not always escape, and he who has been successful for many times, will at length meet with the reward he merits. Thus it now proved, Bob confirmed what Master Dick had said, and his sister

would not betray her brother. Little did they imagine, that their father had been a silent auditor of all that had passed, and that, unseen himself, he had been a spectator of the whole affair.

I shall never forget the stern look of anger with which he regarded the culprits. Dick, conscience-struck, with a look of terror, fell upon his knees; his sister, pale, and trembling, stood beside him: while Bob, who read in his master's countenance that he had nothing to expect, with matchless impudence wished him good morning, and walked out of the yard. 'Let him go,' said his master, as he cast a look of contempt after him, 'but for you, sir, I have long had

suspensions of your conduct; kneel not to me, it is too late to kneel. Did I not blame myself for allowing you to go with such associates, your punishment would be severer; but, in future, I will endeavour to rectify my error. As I can place no dependence on you after the falsehoods you have just uttered, I will send you where you shall have no opportunity of doing ill, and no wicked associates. To-morrow you leave home for school, as a boarder, and I will take care to give such directions as will prevent your having the power to run into error. Rise, sir, and follow me.

“I wonder,” said George, “whether puss has the marks of the dog’s teeth

remaining in her back." Puss was instantly searched, and the incredulity of the party, as to the authenticity of the history, was almost shaken; when, on turning back her hair, the marks of teeth were plainly visible.

The injuries that I had received prevented me from travelling far, and with difficulty I crawled to a neighbouring rick, where I resigned myself to that fate which seemed inevitably approaching. Here, worn out with the fatigues of that terrible day, notwithstanding the pain I suffered from my bruises, I fell asleep. How long I laid in this state I do not know: when I awoke, the sun was shining bright and warm, and the

birds were singing sweetly in the hedges. I tried to rise, but found myself unable, and I had no prospect but that of being starved to death. In the evening, however, the son of a neighbouring farmer found me. I had now, to my inexpressible joy, fallen into the hands of a very different person to my late possessor. He took me very gently up, and, when the agony I suffered on being moved, made me cry out, he put some soft hay in his hat, and laid me in it. He then placed me at the foot of the stack till he had milked the cows—when he poured a little milk into his hand, and gave it me to drink. Thirsty and famished as I was, I thought it the most

delightful that I had ever tasted. I thanked him as well as I was able, and I think he understood me, for he stroked my head, and said, 'poor puss!' As he carried me home, to my horror and surprise, I heard the well remembered voice of my late persecutor. 'Hey Jem! what have you got there, man, so carefully in your hat?—a nest of young birds, I suppose.'—'No, Master Dick,' replied Jem, 'I *be* not such a *natural* as to look for nests in Autumn, or so wicked as to rob the poor birds of their nests at any time; so let me pass on, Master Dick, and dont hold me all day by the shoulder.' 'What,' answered Dick, 'you can never stop a moment to talk with one.

I dare say, now, you have got some apples and pears, or something good in your hat?' 'Not I,' replied Jem, 'and if I had, there would be none of 'em for you.' 'I want none of your apples, but I want to know why you keep your hat so closely covered up?' 'Why,' said honest Jem, 'do you go so round about? could you not ask one plump at once? It's that poor cat, that I saw you and your comrades chasing the other morning, and pelting with stones, and shamed you might be, if any shame you have. Look here at the poor beast—here she lies, unable to stir a limb.'—'I thought as much,' answered Dick, 'and I tell you, that cat is mine, and I desire you

to give her to me; she cost me a flogging, and almost got me sent to school, and I'll be revenged on her.'—'Your own ill ways got you a flogging,' replied Jem, 'and I think it would not much mend them to hurt the poor beast.' 'It does not signify preaching,' answered this wicked boy, 'the cat is mine, and the cat I'll have.' 'Say you so,' said Jem, 'then I say, the cat never was yours, and I'll see no animal abused.' 'Is that the way you talk to a gentleman,' said Dick, and relying on his superior size and strength, he seized the hat with one hand, and struck my protector with the other so furious a blow upon the face, as to make him reel from

its violence. Jem instantly set the hat carefully down, and returned the blow. What followed I do not know, for I was so terrified by the apprehension of falling into the hands of my old foe, that I did not dare to look up. The matter was at length decided, and to my great relief, I found myself carried off by Jem, who had received some very severe blows in my defence. ‘What!’ said his father, when he entered the door of his cottage, ‘what, Jem! thou surely hast not been fighting. How came you by that black eye?’ ‘Oh,’ said Jem, ‘but I have! and with the squire’s son, Master Dick;’ and he related the occasion of the battle. ‘Thou art a brave little fellow,’ said his

father, 'and next fair-day thou shalt have a sixpence to spend. Jem proceeded to make a warm bed of hay by the fire-side for me, and delivered me to the care of his sister, who, by good nursing, restored me to health. I could not help remarking the difference between my late tyrant, and the kind person to whom I owe my life. One lived in a fine house, wore fine clothes, had servants to wait on him, and play-fellows to quarrel with, at command. He spent his days in idleness, and feasting, in playing and rioting; but, with all this, he was not happy. He was of a weak constitution, from the manner in which he had been brought up; tyrannical and

impatient, from never having been contradicted; proud and overbearing, from having no one to play with that had so much money, and wore clothes so fine as himself; he was indolent, because he had nothing to do but to play, and was continually sick with stuffing. Jem lived in a cottage; but he was active and industrious, because his father could not afford to bring his children up in idleness; his clothes were coarse, but they were warm and clean, which was all Jem wanted; his food was plain, but Jem eat his brown bread and milk with more pleasure than Dick feasted on his dainties, because he had a good appetite, with rising early and working hard. He

had no servants to attend upon him, but Jem did not want them, for he could do every thing for himself, and just as he liked. In play, he was active and merry, because he had so little of it that he enjoyed it. Master Dick was disliked, and Jem loved, by all the parish—but to proceed: the day I returned home to you, I had resumed my old habits, and had prowled along the hedges in pursuit of birds, till I had wandered out of my knowledge. After several hours spent in fruitless efforts to regain home, on turning the corner of a wood, I unexpectedly found myself in sight of my old habitation, to which I instantly proceeded, and arrived, as you know, at

night-fall. Poor Jem, I am afraid, will weep for the loss of me.—He knows not what good fortune has befallen me, and will suppose that I have fallen a prey to the dogs, or that I have perished by the hands of cruel boys. This reflection is the only one that embitters my present felicity, and could I give him an occasional visit, nothing would be wanting to complete my happiness. This ends ‘The Three Months’ Adventures of the Tortoise-shell Kitten.’

I shall only add to the above, that puss lived to a great age in the family of Mr. Hervey, that Master Dick, in hunting after birds’ nests, fell from a stack

of hay, and was severely injured, that as soon as he had recovered, he was sent to school, and that during his holidays, having ridden a horse till it would run no further, he alighted and flogged the poor animal, till an unlucky kick cut short his career of cruelty. Honest Jem still lives, happy and respected, and had the pleasure of discovering that puss was not worried, but had found a happy home.



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