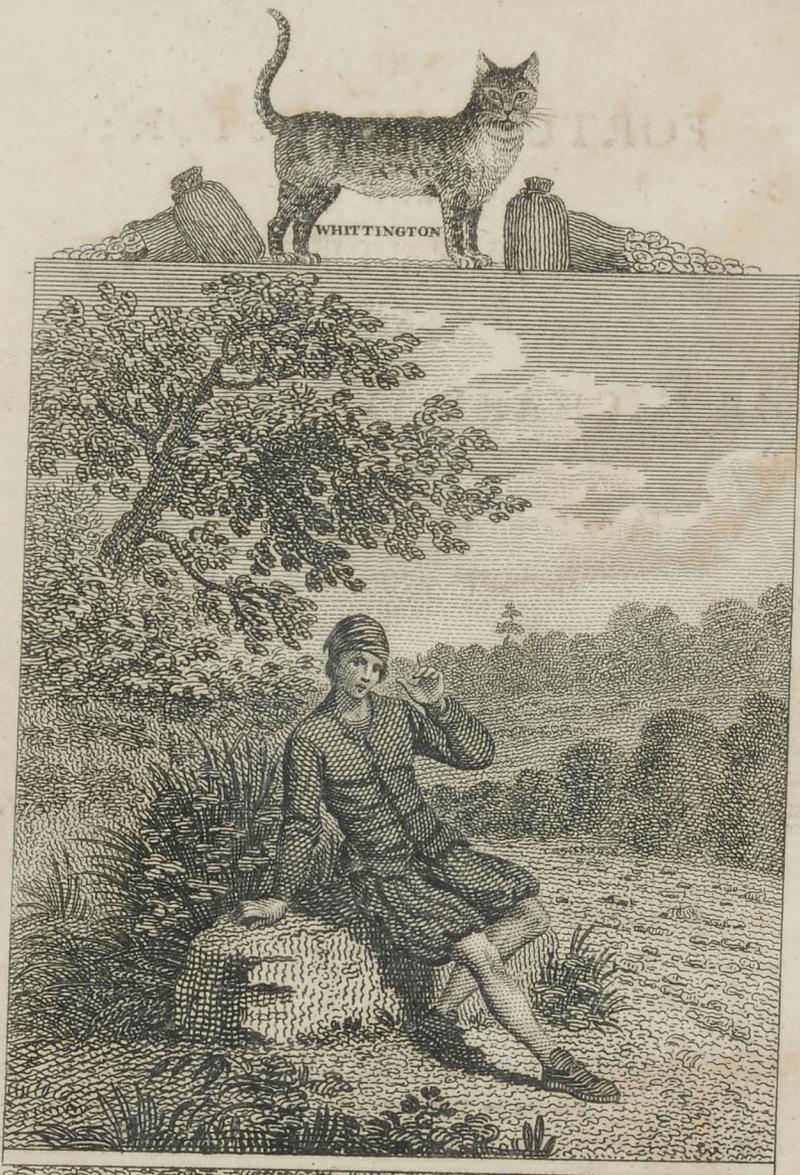


æ (FOSTER)



Whittington listening to the remarkable sound of
BowBells after having run away from his master.

J. Sharpe Del. et Sc.

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THE
FORTUNATE HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON,
WHO WAS
Three Times Lord Mayor of London,
In 1397, 1406, and 1419:

INCLUDING THE INSURRECTION
OF
WAT TYLER AND JACK STRAW.

Faithfully Extracted from Ancient Records.

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LIFE AND TRAVELLING HISTORY

OF THE DOMINANT

SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON

Third Baron of Whittington of London

SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON

OF LONDON

Third Baron of Whittington of London

To "born delight and pleasure have" as
Milton observes is the lot of mankind, who have
but the "world before them, and Providence their
guide" to lead them to independence and end (but not
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every one who wishes to overcome the natural out-
set of poverty and end his day in equal plenty,
and such was the conduct of Richard Whittington, who
thereby put to flight the very remembrance of his
poverty and all regard to respect, and is

According to the account of the most credible
writers, Whittington came to London from Stratford
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or 1338, so that he must have been very young when
he served his first Majesty, in 1337, being then only
about twenty years old.
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tales according and various tales, but the following
is the most of general research and faithful history,
to which is added with judiciously used for such
the story of his cat cannot be called as his remark
bearing truly to this day.
His parents, who were of a good family, were
reduced to poverty from place to place, till he
got to London, where in Somersetshire, where the

100

LIFE AND TRANSACTIONS

OF THE FORTUNATE

SIR RICHARD WHITTINGTON,

Three Times Lord Mayor of London,

1397—1406—1419.

TO "Scorn delights, and live laborious days," as Milton observes, is the lot of mankind, who have but the "world before them, and Providence their guide," to lead them to independence and good fortune for future existence. This must be the resolution of every one who wishes to overcome the perpetual pursuit of penury, and end his days in opulent sufficiency; and such was the conduct of Richard Whittington, who thereby put to flight the very remembrance of difficulties, and ill usage; of neglect, malignity, and ignorance.

According to the account of the most creditable writers, Whittington came to London, from Shropshire, about the forty-second year of King Edward III. or 1368; so that he must have been very young when he served his first Mayoralty, in 1397, being then only about thirty-six years old.

The obscurity of his origin has given occasion to many fabulous accounts, and puerile tales; but the following is the result of careful research, and faithful history, no where interlarded with traditionary trash; for such the story of his cat cannot be called, as his armorial bearings testify to this day.

His peregrination to town was round about and tedious; for he wandered from place to place till he got to Taunton Dean, in Somersetshire, where, dis-

gusted with the usage of his employers, he formed the resolution of coming to London. In his way to this place, he lived chiefly upon the charity of well-disposed persons, and the carriers on the road, one of whom allowed him to walk by the side of his horses, and at night to sleep in his waggon. On this occasion he rewarded his benefactor with twopence when he arrived at Gerhard's Hall; because, as he observed, he was not a troublesome hanger-on, but would work if he could find it.

Travelling on foot 400 years ago, and in cross roads too, must have been very fatiguing and unpleasant. They were, indeed, what the great lawyer Lyttleton once called them, *feathered* roads; not from their softness, or smoothness, gentle reader, but because they were then fit only to be traversed by the fowls of the air.

Arrived in London, every thing was a wonder to his mind; but he did not lose his time much in admiration; for he soon made an application to the Prior of the Hospital of St. John's Clerkenwell, where he was kindly relieved; and being handy and willing, was soon put into an inferior post in the house. How long he remained here, is, I believe, nowhere mentioned; but to the piety of the charitable foundation he was certainly indebted for his first support in London. His next reception was in the family of Mr. Fitzwarren, a rich merchant, whose house was in the Minories, near the Tower. Here he undoubtedly acted as under scullion, for his keep only; a very low step to rise from to the honor and affluence he did, in being several times chief magistrate of the city, and banker of kings.

In this situation he met with many crosses and difficulties; for the servants made sport of him; and the ill-natured cook told him, "You are to come under me; so look sharp, clean the spits and the dripping-pan, make the fires, wind up the jack, and nimbly do all other scullery work that I may set you about, or else I will break your head with my ladle, and kick you about like a foot-ball."

This was cold comfort, but better than starving: and what gave him a beam of hope, was, Mrs. Alice, his master's daughter, who hearing her father had entertained another servant, came to see him, and ordered that he should be kindly used. After she had discoursed with him about his kindred, and method of life, and found his answers ingenuous, she ordered him some cast-off garments, and that he should be cleaned, and appear like a servant in the house. Then she went to her parents, and gave them her opinion of this stranger, which pleased them well, saying, "He looks like a serviceable fellow to do kitchen drudgery, run on errands, clean shoes, and do such other things as the rest of the servants think beneath them."

By this time he was confirmed in his place, and a flock bed prepared in the garret for him. These circumstances pleased him much; and he exerted his utmost diligence in performing every thing to the satisfaction of his employers.

But, alas! from his being mostly under the cookmaid, he had but sour sauce for all his pains; for, being of a morose temper, she used him very ill, scolding him without allowance, and not unfrequently with a sturdy arm, laid the ladle across his shoulders; so that, to keep in the family, he had many a sore bout to put up with; but his patience carried it off, and at last he grew used to her choleric disposition. Yet she was not content with this only; she even tried with his master and mistress to get him discharged; but his young mistress having an eye of compassion for him, and frequently observing his treatment, interposed in his favor, so that she should not prevail against him.

This was not the only misfortune he laboured under; for, lying in a place for a long time unfrequented, such abundance of rats and mice had bred there, that they were almost ready at times to dispute the possession of the place with him, and full as troublesome by night as the cook was by day, running over his face, and disturbing him with their squeaking; so that he knew not what to think of his condition, or how to mend it.

After many disquieting thoughts, he at last comforted himself with the hopes that the cook might soon marry, or die, or quit her service; and as for the rats and mice, a cat would be an effectual remedy against them.

Soon after a merchant came to dinner, and, it raining exceedingly, he staid all night, whose shoes Whittington having cleaned, and presented at his chamber door, he gave him a penny. This stock he improved; for, going along the street of an errand, he saw a woman with a cat under her arm, and he desired to know the price of it: the woman praised it for a good mouser, and told him sixpence; but he declaring that a penny was all his stock, she let him have it.

He took the cat home, and kept her in a box all day, lest the cook should kill her if she came into the kitchen, and at night he set her to work for her living. Puss delivered him from one plague; but the other remained, though not for many years.

It was the custom with the worthy merchant, Mr. Hugh Fitzwarren, that God might give him a greater blessing for his endeavours, to call all his servants together when he sent out a ship, and cause every one to venture something in it, to try their fortunes, for which they were to pay nothing for freight or custom.

Now all but Whittington appeared, and brought things according to their abilities; but Mrs. Alice being by, and supposing that poverty made him decline coming, she ordered him to be called, on which he made several excuses: however, being constrained to come, he hoped they would not jeer a poor simpleton for being in expectation of turning merchant, since all that he could lay claim to, as his own, was but a poor cat, which he had bought for one penny, which he had given him for cleaning shoes, that had much befriended him in keeping the rats and mice from him. Upon this, Mrs. Alice proffered to lay something down for him: but her father told her the custom; it must be his own which must be ventured; and then ordered him to bring his cat, which he did, but with great reluctance, fancying nothing would come of it; and with

tears delivered it to the master of the ship, which was called the Unicorn, and had fallen down to Blackwall, in order to proceed on her voyage.

From Blackwall the ship sailed to the Motherbank at Woodenbridge, during which passage Puss was frisky and blythe as any of the purring tribe, the steward and cook taking particular care and notice of her. On the ninth day they reached Gibraltar, where they stopped a short time to refresh. The wind, for several days afterwards, became so light, that they scarce sailed above two miles an hour, and all in-shore; for at that time ships seldom went out of sight of land, and in the day time, coming to anchor at night. They kept on in this way for fifteen days more, at the end of which they arrived in the Mole of Algiers, and anchored. Here the first news they heard, was, that the plague was rife in the country, having been but a few years before brought from China, viz. in 1346, at which period it was first noticed to rage in Africa, from whence it soon proceeded to Europe, overspreading the northern countries. This news did not deter the captain from sending to trade on shore, where, at first, they found but little encouragement, the people of the country appearing very shy to every offer. Their chief lading being canary seed and cheese, when they came to remove it, they found it very much damaged by rats and mice, many of which lay dead, and half eaten, by Whittington's Cat. This prowess of puss brought her into much credit; for it is credibly reported, she never left her prey half done over. The news of the arrival of a vessel soon reached the notice of the Dey, who immediately ordered the captain and officers to wait upon his highness with presents; for then, as well as now, nothing could be done without first bribing him. After this first ceremony was over, trade went on pretty briskly, at the conclusion of which, his Moorish Majesty gave a grand entertainment, which, according to custom, was served upon carpets, interwoven with gold, silver, and purple silk. This feast was no sooner served up with the various dishes, but the scent brought

together a number of rats and mice, who unmercifully fell on all that came in their way.

These audacious and destructive vermin did not shew any symptoms of fear upon the approach of the company, but, on the contrary, kept to it as if they only were invited. This made the captain and his people very much wonder; who, interrogating the Algerines, were informed, a very great price would be given by his Highness, the Dey, for a cure, and a riddance of these vermin, which were grown so numerously offensive, that not only his table, but his private apartments, and bed, were so infested, that he was forced to be constantly watched for fear of being devoured.

This information put the English company immediately in mind of poor Dick Whittington's Cat, which had done them such notable service on the passage; and wishing to serve the youth, thought this the best time to come forward with the little industrious animal. Accordingly she was forthwith brought the next day, when her presence suddenly kept off most of the vermin; a few only of the boldest daring to venture forward, all of whom she dispatched with wonderful celerity. This pleased his Algerine Highness so much, that he immediately made very advantageous proposals to the factor of the ship for the possession of this surprising and useful animal. At first our people seemed very reluctant to part with it; but his liberality soon overcame every objection; and her purchase amounted, in various commodities, to several thousands of pounds. During the time the English remained here, her industry in destroying those noxious vermin so compleatly pleased the Moorish Chief, that, at our people's departure, he again loaded them with presents, amongst which was some excellent casks of Candy wine, which at that time was equal to sack.

The diversion the Cat had afforded, and the certainty of her being with young, and would stock the country, very much facilitated the English traders' concerns, inasmuch, that their goods were all sold off, and the

country produce safely stowed on board in less than half the time usually spent on such expeditions.

They sailed from Algiers without any visitation of the plague, it being in the month of September, when the winds are chiefly from the north-east quarter, which are well known to extinguish that exterminating distemper with as much expedition as water does fire. As the vessel was a sloop, and but one deck, the sailors, not only during their stay in the country, but the whole voyage after, were obliged to eat and sleep on the goods and merchandise, the principal part of which was acquired by the cat.

Their passage home was short, touching at Gibraltar and Guernsey. At the fortnight's end, they made Portland Roads, where they went on shore, and relating their good success, and extraordinary adventure with the Cat, the Mayor of Weymouth invited the captain and supercargö to dinner, when they became very merry with Canary wine sent from on board, and mum from his worship's cellar. At the conclusion of the feast, it was resolved upon to advise Mr. Fitzwarren, the merchant, of the good success of his ship, and particularly of the rich adventure of the Cat. This advice, when he received it, he directly communicated to the servants; and the most of their astonishment was at Whittington's great good luck with his Cat. This had a wonderful effect upon their minds, but more especially upon Mrs. Alice, the cook, who had hitherto jeered him so unmercifully.

This young woman, who little thought how advantageous Whittington's Cat would prove, had kept up such a continual alarm of noise and reproach at the poor youth's unfortunate penury, that he grew weary of enduring it, and not the least expecting what followed, resolved rather to try his fortune again in the wide world, than lead any longer such a disagreeable life. For this step he might be blamed, as, had he complained to his master, who was a kind gentleman, the difference would have been set to rights, and he, not like a Jonas, cast out. With this resolution, how-

ever, he set out early on Allhallows morning, resolving to go into the country, and get into a more agreeable service.

As he went over Finsbury Moor, since called Moorfields, his mind began to fail; he hesitated, and halted several times: he grew pensive, and his resolution left him. In this solitary manner he wandered on until he reached Holloway, where he sat down upon a large stone, which remains there to be seen to this day. Here he began to ruminate in earnest upon his ill-luck in not pleasing the cook; and in the depth of his meditation, he suddenly heard Bow-bells strike out for a peal. This changed his attention; for, as he listened, on a sudden, he fancied, they called him back again to his master. The more he hearkened, the more he became confirmed in this notion of his recall, conceiving the bells expressed the following distich:

“ RETURN AGAIN, WHITTINGTON,
“ THRICE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON.”

This proved a happy thought for him; and it made so great an impression on his fancy, that, finding it early, and thinking that he might yet get back before the family were stirring, he instantly turned upon his steps, and got home in less time than he went out. The door being ajar, he crept softly in, when every thing answering his expectation, he got unperceived to his usual daily drudgery, of scouring pots and scullery. Even Mrs. Alice, his *good* friend, did not perceive any symptom of his intentioned running away.

Things were in this situation when the news arrived of the success of the voyage; and that night he was installed with the appellation of *Mr.* by his master, who informed him, that his ship had that time arrived at Blackwall, being the richest vessel of her burden that had ever floated into an English port. His master concluded his discourse with a pious admonition to all his servants, after which they all joined in a thanksgiving to the Almighty for such a prosperous voyage.

Mrs. Alice, the cook, was among the first to change her demeanor towards Whittington, calling him Sir, and inviting him to such and such relishes as the kitchen afforded. But Mr. Fitzwarren, the merchant, had other plans in view; and he had an only daughter, who was worthy of an honest man, a character at that time more esteemed than nobility itself.

When the bill of lading was presented to the merchant, the principal part was found to belong to Mr. Whittington, amongst which was a cabinet of rich jewels, the last present of the Dey. This was the first thing brought to Mr. Fitzwarren's house, it being deemed too valuable to remain on board.

When the servants goods for their ventures were all brought up to be divided, Mr. Whittington's was too bulky to be unpacked before them; but the pearls and jewels alone were estimated at two hundred thousand pounds; a vast fortune in those days.

The humility of Mr. Whittington's mind arising from a strong sense of his duty to society in general, prevented his temper from exhilarating into arrogance, petulance, or superciliousness: though suddenly grown rich, and become equal to the first merchants in the city, pride had no share in the change of his circumstances. On the contrary, at first, he could hardly be prevailed upon to let the scullery alone; but Mr. Fitzwarren took much pains with him, introduced him to the first characters in town, not omitting the court, as well as the clergy and military, who at that time were reckoned the most agreeable connections.

In the midst of all this bustle, he did not forget his old fellow servants, to each of whom he presented 100 marks, besides a compleat set of garments: but to Mrs. Alice he gave 200, adding, with a joke, "I heartily forgive your incivility; and whenever, Madam, you please to make choice of a husband, I will make you the greatest fortune in the world." Neither was the captain, master and others of the ship's company, forgotten; to all he made suitable presents, down to the little cabin boy.

King Edward the Third being then at war with the French, and preparing for the siege of Rochelle, solicited of all the privileged orders of the kingdom for a subsidy to carry on his expedition. The loyalty of the city of London induced them to offer a large gift in their corporate capacity. In this scheme Mr. Whittington joined, and paid in 10,000*l.* an astonishing sum for those days from an individual; but the military ardor of the country has always been remarkable; hence it is not wonderful that an enterprising and fortunate young man should come forward with so large a sum, when it is considered that history has almost left us in the dark as to the remuneration expected. Be this as it may, history places it in the forty-sixth year of the King's reign, A. D. 1372. The success did not answer his great preparation; for his fleet was dispersed by contrary winds, and he was forced to disband his soldiers. In this expedition he wasted above 900,000*l.* an incredible sum, considering the great expences he had been at before in his wars, the then prices of all things, and the oppressive way of raising the taxes.

But, to return to our citizen; every thing flourished he took in hand; he seemed to be born with a "silver spoon in his hand," as the saying goes. What contributed much at the same time in his favour, was the absence of the Lombard merchants, who withdrew themselves from London, on account of the oppression of the King, which became excessive towards the latter end of his reign, for continual draughts to support his ambition in France. These, and the Jews abroad, conducted at that time the whole financial commerce of the city of London; but Mr. Whittington, upon their departure, came in for a considerable share of it.

We are now regularly come to the last year of King Edward's reign, the fifty-second, when the Lords and Commons granted the King a poll-tax, at four-pence a head, for every man and woman passing the age of fourteen years, beggars only excepted. The clergy at the same time granted twelve-pence for every person beneficed; and of all other religious persons, four-pence

by the poll, the four orders of Friars Mendicants only excepted. Here it is worth observing, that the King demanding of the city of London to advance him 4000l. upon this poll, and the Mayor, Adam Staple, proving backward in performing the same, he was by the King turned out of that office, and Sir Richard Whittington put into his place, to finish the year; and this is the first mention of his being knighted, and of his great importance in the city at that time, being only about ten years after his coming there.

According to Stow, Sir Richard Whittington was a great dealer in wool, leather, cloth, and pearls, which were universally worn at that time by the ladies. In 1377, the first year of King Richard II. he was called by summons to the parliament that met at London, which commenced at Michaelmas, and lasted till the feast of St. Andrew, when it was dissolved by the mutinous conduct of the Londoners, and adjourned to Northampton the following year, where was passed the noted poll-tax, the collecting of which occasioned and created the rebellion of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw.

History of the Insurrection of WALTER TYLER, of Deptford, and JACK STRAW, of Essex.

The poll-tax imposed by the Parliament in 1381, was levied with great gentleness, insomuch that the collectors excused many persons. But as there are but too many who make it their business to enrich themselves at the expence of the public, there were some that persuaded the King and Council, if the tax was levied with more strictness, it would bring in much greater sums, and even offered money to have the management of it. Very probably, they were Flemings that farmed the tax, and obliged themselves to give the King a certain sum for the produce thereof. The new collectors appointed by these Farmers, levied the tax with extreme rigor. One who collected in Kent, demanding of a Tyler at Deptford, named Walter, four-pence for one of his daughters, the father affirmed she was under the age set

down in the Act of Parliamet: whereupon the insolent collector (as these sort of people generally were) endeavouring to know the truth by an indecent motion, the father with his hammer knocked out his brains. All the spectators applauded the action, and promised the murderer, commonly called Wat Tyler, to protect him. At the same time, the spirit of rebellion seized not the inhabitants of Deptford alone, but likewise all the meaner sort of the county of Kent, who were soon followed by those of Essex. The poll-tax was not their sole grievance. The people of those parts had long been in a ferment, which being inflamed by this accident, broke out into open rebellion. They complained of the little care to hinder the frequent descents of the French, who had committed great ravages in these two counties. To this was added a general discontent against the Judges, and all the agents of the law, who ruined families by their extortions. The Nobles and Gentry were no less hated by the peasants, on account of the right of villainage, which was extremely abused. The populace were moreover extremely incensed against the Duke of Lancaster, who was charged with causing, by his negligence, all the calamities the two counties had endured. All these complaints being spread in those parts, and countenanced by the seditious, or, as some affirm, by the monks, who thought themselves injured by the poll-tax, to which they were liable, produced a wonderful effect. In a short time, Wat Tyler, chosen by the seditious, chief and protector of the poor people, saw himself at the head of above a hundred thousand men, breathing revenge on the Nobility, and Professors of the Law. Thus attended, he marched directly to London, freeing, in his route, all the prisoners detained in the public goals. Amongst these was a priest of Maidstone, one John Ball, who, by his seditious sermons, raised the people's fury to the utmost height. He persuaded them that all men being sons of Adam, there ought to be no distinction, and consequently it was their duty to reduce the world to a perfect equality; and made use

of the following quaint distich to enforce his absurd opinion:

*When Adam delv'd, and Eve span,
Who was then a Gentleman?*

Pursuant to this maxim, they resolved to dispatch all the Nobility, and those that were distinguished by their posts. So, without further consideration, they cut off the heads of all the Lords, Gentlemen, Judges, Counsellors, and Lawyers, that fell into their hands. After this, they bound themselves by oath, never to acknowledge for King, any man whose name should be *John*. This resolution sprung from their hatred to the Duke of Lancaster, who bore that name, and was suspected of aspiring to the Crown.

Richard hearing the seditious were come as far as Blackheath, where Wat Tyler reviewed his army, sent to know what they wanted. They replied, they had affairs of great moment to communicate to the King, and desired him to come and talk with them in person. This insolent request being debated in council, some were of opinion, the King should comply with the rebels, alledging, that as he was not in a condition to oppose force to force, gentleness was the only way to gain them. But Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Robert de Hales, Prior of St. John's, and High-Treasurer of England, strenuously opposed it, maintaining it was not safe for the King to trust his person with this rabble. Accordingly, the rebels' request was rejected with threats, little agreeable to the present situation of the court. Upon this news, the seditious fell into such a fury, that immediately they marched towards London, and possessed themselves of Southwark, parted from the City by the Thames. The plunder of the suburbs having given them no great interruption, they endeavoured to enter the city. London-bridge had then gates, which being shut at their approach, might have stopped for some time their impetuosity, if the mob, who presently sided with them, had not opened them in spite of the magistrates. Nothing more opposing their march,

they entered the City, where they committed all the ravages that could be expected from so numerous a body, guided solely by their fury. The Duke of Lancaster's palace, the Savoy, was reduced to ashes; and the houses of such as they deemed their enemies, were given up to be plundered. However, their leaders pretending not to be swayed by avarice, hindered their people from appropriating to themselves any part of the booty. They even threw into the fire, which consumed all the plundered riches, a man that would have retained a piece of plate. In this universal confusion, wherein London was like a town taken by storm, the Archbishop's Palace, and the Temple, with all the writings kept there, were devoured by the flames, and also the Hospital of St. John of Clerkenwell. The houses of the Judges, Lords, and principal Citizens, shared the same fate. This unruly mob took care to accomplish their oath, to extirpate all appearances of grandeur or distinction. The Flemings, against whom they were extremely incensed, were above all others exposed to their fury. They dragged them from the churches where they had taken sanctuary, and, upon their not being able to pronounce certain words, very difficult for foreigners, they were immediately massacred.

After the rebels had thus given these first marks of their fury, they approached the Tower, which might have been easily defended, if the terror spread in the garrison had not caused them to open the gates. There they found the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Treasurer, who thought themselves safe in that place, and without any process cut off their heads. This done, they divided themselves into three bodies. Wat Tyler remained about the Tower with thirty thousand men. Jack Straw (another of their Captains) advanced into the City with the Rebels of Essex, to the number of sixty thousand. The rest, under the conduct of another leader, lodged themselves upon Mile-End Green.

Mean time, the King and Council were in the utmost perplexity. After long debates how to stop these furious proceedings, no better way was found than to offer

the rebels an authentic charter, confirming the privileges of the people, and a general pardon for all crimes committed since the insurrection. The Essex men readily accepted these offers; though they were now in the heart of the City. Accordingly, leaving some of their leaders to hasten the charters and pardon, they returned to their homes.

But Wat Tyler was not so tractable; though he pretended his sole aim was to obtain equitable terms. However, as he appeared willing to enter into a negociation with the King himself, Richard, with a few attendants, came to Smithfield, from whence he sent a Knight (Sir John Newton) to desire him to come, and confer with him. Wat insolently replied, he would come when he thought proper. Nevertheless, he moved forward immediately, at the head of his troops; but so slowly, that the King, beginning to be out of patience, and willing to press him to make more haste, sent the same Knight to him, which had like to have cost him his life. Wat Tyler was just entered Smithfield, when the Knight delivered the King's message, without alighting; not imagining he would stand upon that ceremony. But the proud leader was so offended at this want of respect, that he was going to kill him, if the King, who was himself advancing, had not cried out to the Knight to dismount.

In Wat Tyler's conference with the King, being both on horseback, he made such extravagant proposals, that Richard knew not what to say to him. He demanded, in short, that all the ancient laws should be abolished, and the government modelled according to certain fantastical notions framed by himself. Whilst he made these demands, he now and then lifted up his sword, as it were to threaten the King, in case he granted not immediately what the rebels would have. This brutish insolence so raised the indignation of William Waltham, Mayor of London, who attended the King, that, without considering to what danger he exposed his master, he discharged such a blow on the rebel's head with his sword, as laid him dead at his feet.

This action, no less imprudent than bold, should naturally have occasioned the ruin of the King and all his attendants; but, by an unexpected happiness, produced a contrary effect. It is true, when the rebels saw their leader on the ground, they encouraged one another to revenge his death. Nay, their bows were now bent to shoot at the King and his retinue. But Richard prevented the danger, by a bolder and more prudent action than could be expected from a young Prince of fifteen years. Instead of flying, he turned to the rebels, and cried, with a resolute and courageous voice, "What, my lieges! will you then kill your King? Be not concerned for the loss of your leader; I myself will now be your general; follow me into the field, and you shall have whatever you desire." Upon saying these words, he gently turned his horse, and putting himself at their head, rode towards St. George's Fields. The young King's resolution made such an impression on the minds of the rebels, that, imagining he really declared for them, they altered their first purpose, and followed him without delay. They were no sooner come into the fields, but they saw marching towards them a troop of a thousand armed citizens, raised by the Mayor, under the conduct of Sir Robert Knolles, an officer of great reputation. This sight struck them with such terror, that, falsely imagining the whole city was in arms to attack them, the foremost ranks threw down their arms, and begged quarter. This proceeding terrifying the rest, who knew not the cause, every one pressed to follow their example. Thus in a few moments the whole multitude was dispersed without the effusion of any blood, but the leader's.

One cannot, without wonder, consider an event so singular, and full of extraordinary circumstances. An insurrection, indeed, is not so very strange; but to see it headed by such a person as Wat Tyler is not usual, though the like instances may possibly be found in other histories. But it is doubtless beyond the common course of events, for a single man, as the Mayor of London, to dare to kill this leader, attended by thirty thousand

men. It is still more surprising, that a young Prince, but fifteen years old, should have the presence of mind, and resolution, shown by Richard on this occasion, and that his boldness should produce so good an effect. In fine, that so numerous a multitude, just glutted with blood and slaughter, should disperse on a sudden by a panic fear, at the sight of a few armed citizens, is what cannot be considered without astonishment, and without ascribing the cause to Him who holds the hearts of the people in his hand. And, indeed, we shall see presently, that no less than a sort of miracle could prevent the utter destruction of England, considering the pernicious designs the rebels had formed.

It was not only in the counties of Kent and Essex, that the spirit of rebellion possessed the people. Whilst Wat Tyler and Jack Straw were marching to London, John Ball and John Wraw, two seditious Priests, stirred up the populace of Suffolk, where they quickly assembled fifty thousand men. They committed in those parts numberless barbarities, as if they were afraid of being out-done in cruelty, by those who exercised their fury in London. Sir John Cavendish, Chief Justice, fell a sacrifice to their rage. After that, they burnt all the ancient charters of the Abbey of St. Edmund's-Bury, and in the University of Cambridge.

On the other hand, Littester, an alehouse-keeper at Norwich, headed another body of rebels in the county of Norfolk, and cruelly put to death all the Judges and Lawyers that fell into his hands. As for the Lords and Gentlemen, he had the insolence to oblige them to serve him on the knee; and if any one scrupled to submit to that indignity, immediately ordered his head to be cut off. In this manner he treated the Earl of Suffolk, who would not feign to approve of their rebellion. As it was impossible for the King's Council to take measures speedy enough to remedy these disorders, it was necessary that private persons should of themselves use their endeavours, without staying for orders from Court, to free themselves from the impending danger. Henry Spencer, Bishop of Norwich, a prelate of great courage,

though educated in an unwarlike profession, thought it his duty to do something more than barely offer up prayers, on so pressing an occasion, which equally threatened clergy and laity. He headed a few loyal subjects, and attacking the rebels, made a terrible slaughter. The two leaders, Wraw and Littester, being taken in the fight, the first was beheaded upon the spot, and the other sent to London, to receive the just reward of his crimes.

These troubles being appeased sooner, and more happily, than could be expected, the King, by advice of his Council, resolved to chastise the guilty. To that end, the Lords had orders to raise, in every county, troops of known loyalty, and lead them to London. In a short time was drawn together an army of forty thousand men, which being divided into two bodies, one marched into the county of Kent. At the head of the other the King went himself, to punish the people of Essex, who began to stir again, upon the revocation of the charter and general pardon, with which they had been allured. As these people had not time to take their measures, but found themselves prevented by the King's diligence, they were easily defeated. Great numbers were slain, and many others reserved for public examples. Among the last, was Jack Straw, companion of Wat Tyler, and head of the Essex rebels. He confessed, if they had succeeded in their projects, as they had reason to expect, their design was to murder the King, root out the Nobility and Clergy, excepting the Mendicant Friars, part England into several kingdoms, make Wat Tyler King of Kent, abolish all the ancient, and make new laws. Probably these projects were framed only in general, and it may be, over their bowls, whilst they were on the march to London. Be that as it will, such a design, managed by heads little capable of executing it, could hardly fail of ending in the ruin of the authors. It is affirmed, that, besides those that fell with their arms in their hands, above fifteen hundred died by the hangman; the chief of whom died obdurately impenitent, particularly Jack Straw,

and Litterester, the publican. For this good service, King Richard knighted the Lord Mayor, and also I. Philpot, Nicholas Brembar, and Robert Laund, Aldermen, to whom he assigned a pension each. Upon this occasion, it is said, the dagger was added to the City arms; tho' Mr. Stow thinks it be St. Paul's-Sword.

Walsingham, a good writer of those times, relates the following fact, in 1392, being the fifteenth of the King's reign. The King sent to borrow 1000l. of the city of London, which they peremptorily refused, beyond, perhaps, what became them, urging his extravagance and profusion, and the vast sums already due to them from his grandfather. Not yet satisfied with this, a certain Lombard merchant offering to lend the King that sum, they raised a mob, who beat and shamefully treated the foreigner, and had it not been for Sir Richard Whittington, might have murdered him. The King hearing of this, was much provoked; and summoning almost all the prime men of the kingdom, laid before them the insolence of the Citizens of London, complaining of their presumption. The Lords and Barons being all offended at the Citizens on several accounts, consulted how their contumacy and pride might be corrected; for at that time the Citizens were the most consequential, arrogant and haughty people in the kingdom; professing little faith; favoring the Lollards, and slighting the Church; defrauders of tithes, and oppressors of the clergy. This was the chief offence, their rebutting arbitrary oppression, and calling a *Tolke Mote*, or Common Hall, it was unanimously agreed not to lend the money, although Sir Richard offered to advance the whole sum out of his own pocket. In short, the Mayor, Sheriffs, and some of the greatest offenders, were secured, and sent prisoners to several places, their charter made void, and a Warden of the City appointed during the King's pleasure. At length, after they had been thus some time under disgrace, putting the King to great charges in reducing them, his good temper prevailed, and going to London, they met him on the road with the money: then, farther to regain his favour, they made him very rich presents, and,

beside, raised him, in a short time, 10,000*l.* more to have their liberties restored. This is what Stow relates from Walsingham of the raising of the money, Whittington being Sheriff that year; his long relation being here very much shortened.

In 1395, the eighteenth of this King's reign, Edmund, Duke of York, the King's uncle, held a Parliament at London, the King being absent in Ireland, and relating to the Citizens the great streights the King was reduced to in Ireland, they granted him a tenth upon their merchandise, and a fifteenth upon their personal estates; first protesting that they were not in rigour of right obliged to it, but that they did it out of affection. The mission to this Parliament, we are particularly informed by Sir Robert Cotton, from Leland's papers, was managed by the uprightness and good judgment of Sir Richard Whittington.

It also appears from the parliamentary Rolls, that the Citizens only granted this for four years, on condition that it should be bestowed upon the wars; that the King should be advised by his council; and that the wars ceasing before the time expired, payment might determine. Thus we see Whittington, from a poor, deserted and forlorn boy,

From the lowest, abject and deserted state,
Employed with confidence midst the busy great;

and conducting the concerns of the first and most renowned republic in any kingdom of the world; for so certainly must the city of London be considered, governing itself independently by its own laws.

Thus he grew in riches and fame the most considerable of the Citizens, greatly beloved by all, especially the poor, several hundreds of whom he publicly or secretly assisted or supplied.

About this time it was that he married his master's daughter, Miss Fitzwarren; and at their wedding was present, among other noble characters, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, John of Ghaunt; Chaucer, the Poet-laureat; Scogan, the King's Jester; and, if we may

credit Ben Johnson, the Poet Gower, who was then a young man. Large quantities of sack and Barbary wine were consumed on this occasion, and the splendid feast lasted one week. Mr. Whittington's active management of the city police brought him often into dangerous scrapes; but his prudence was equal to the exigence of every circumstance. In the summer of 1391, a dreadful affray happened at a tavern in the city, between John Anneslee, Knight, and Thomas Katryngton, Esq. whom the aforesaid Knight had accused in parliament, of treason, for selling to the French the Castle of St. Saviour's, built by the Duke of Chandos in the Isle of Cotentin, in France. The citizens were greatly alarmed. However, the Lord Mayor, and some Aldermen, represented the matter to the King, who summoned them into his presence at Westminster, where they decided their dispute by single combat before him, and a multitude of spectators. Katryngton was overcome, and thereupon ran mad, and soon after died in confinement.

Many curious particulars relating to this fortunate and thrifty character, have been lost in the lapse of time; and it is impossible to ascertain, among other things, the date when he built his house in Grub-street, in a narrow passage, now quite surrounded by houses, called Butler's Alley; and such is the succession of tenantry, that this Lord Mayor's house is now a *Penny Barber's* shop, where beards are mown, that in former times were worn as venerable honours.

According to the pretorian banner, once existing in Guildhall, but since destroyed by the fire which consumed the city archives, he served his first mayoralty in 1397. He was now near forty years of age, of a goodly form, and chosen into the office by his fellow citizens; whose approbation of his conduct, after his having once before filled the office, when King Edward put him in, is a sound and substantial proof that he was a good, loyal and patriotic man.

He was one of those who went from the City to the Tower to King Richard II. to put him in mind of

his promise to relinquish the government; and was upon that constituted one of the King's proxies to declare his renunciation. According to Stow and Collier, he assisted at the coronation of Henry IV. when he took the oath of homage and allegiance to him. He assisted at the Great Council which that King soon after summoned, to demand aid of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal against his enemies, the Kings of France and Scotland, who were then preparing to invade England; in which council the City of London, as well as the Barons and Clergy, unanimously granted the King a tenth to support him in this war, which was undertaken by Charles IX. of France to restore his father-in-law, Richard II. who was yet alive. Whittington's name stands second, Scroop, Archbishop of York, being first, of those privy counsellors who were commissioned to treat on the King's part with the Earl of Northumberland, about the exchange of castles and lands. But the good designs of Whittington and the City were all set aside by the unfortunate King's death, who was murdered at last in the first year of King Henry IV.

Another proof of the uprightness of his disposition, was his taking the part of the Carthusian Friar, who came from Ireland to inform the King of the dreadful conspiracy entered into against his life by the famous John of Ghaunt; for, although that nobleman owed him large sums of money, yet he preferred the King's safety to any other consideration. But he failed in his good intentions; and the poor Friar was at last hanged privately in the house of one John Green, a creature of the Duke of Lancaster. The ambition of this man was beyond bounds. In right of his wife Constantia, he took upon him the title of King of Castile and Leon, whither he went, and made an unsuccessful attempt at conquest. After the death of his first wife, he married Catharine Swinford, a lady he entertained in his first wife's time, and by whom he had four children. These he got the Parliament to legitimate, and at the same time to create the mother Countess of Beaufort. King Rich. II. whom he conspired against, created his

eldest son the first Earl of Somerset in 1396, who jointly conspiring with the young Duke of Lancaster, wrested the crown from the unfortunate Richard's head, at last to place it upon that of another of his own family before the King was dead. His cruel death in Pontefract Castle is well known; and, according to Hearne, in his Appendix to the Antiquities of Glastonbury Abbey, this great Duke of Lancaster died of excessive lewdness the same time, being deemed then the greatest fornicator in England.

Sir Richard's second mayoralty occurred in 1406, in the reign of Henry IV. All that we find of him about this time is, that he kept the noblest house that ever citizen had done; that he daily allowed meat and drink, beside cloathing, to an incredible number of dependents; and that his household was before the King's in the richness of their liveries, which custom then first prevailed throughout England. We learn also, that during the short but extravagant reign of this King, that he lent vast sums to government, which got him the name of the GOLDEN MERCHANT. His last service of Mayor happened in 1419, in Henry the Fifth's time, in which situation he behaved with his usual spirit and prudence. Though age had now taken off much of his activity, yet he was the most vigilant magistrate of his time. Soon after Henry's conquest of France, Sir Richard entertained him and his Queen at Guildhall, in such grand stile, that he was pleased to say, "Never Prince had such a subject;" and conferred upon some of the Aldermen the honour of knighthood.

At this entertainment the King particularly praised the fire, which was made of choice wood, mixed with mace, cloves, and all other spices; on which Sir Richard said, he would endeavour to make one still more agreeable to his Majesty, and immediately tore, and threw into the fire, the King's bond for 10,000 marks due to the Company of Mercers; 12,500 to the Chamber of London; 12,000 to the Mercers, Staplers, Goldsmiths, Haberdashers, Vintners, Brewers, and Bakers; 3,000 marks each. 'All these,' said Sir Richard, 'with

divers others lent for the payment of your soldiers in France, I have taken in and discharged, to the amount of 60,000l. sterling. Can your Majesty desire to see such another sight?' The King and Nobles were struck dumb with surprise at his wealth and liberality.

Sir Richard spent the remainder of his days in honourable retirement at home, in his house in Grub-Street, beloved by the rich and the poor. By his wife he left two sons, some of whose posterity are still worthy Citizens. He built many charitable houses; founded a Church in Vintry Ward, dedicated to St. Michael. Here he built an handsome vault, for the sepulchre of his father and mother-in-law, and the remainder of the Fitzwarren family, and where himself and wife lay afterwards.

In 1413, he founded an Alms-house and College in the Vintry, which was afterwards suppressed by order of Council in King Edward the VIth's time. But his Alms-houses on College-Hill remains; these are under the direction of the Mercer's Company, who allow each pensioner 3s. and 10d. per week. The particulars of the College are as follow.

Whittington College was founded on the spot where now stands the Parish-Church of St. Michael, called Pater-noster Church, in the Royal.

This Church was new builded, and made a College of St. Spirit, and St. Mary, founded by Richard Whittington, Mercer, four times Mayor, for a Master, four Fellows, Masters of Arts, Clerks, Conducts, Chorists, &c. and an Alms-house, called God's House or Hospital, for thirteen poor Men. One of them to be Tutor, and to have 16d. the week; the other twelve each of them to have 14d. the week for ever, with other necessary provision, an hutch with three docks, a common seal, &c.

These (as the manner then was) were bound to pray for the good estate of Richard Whittington, and Alice his Wife, their Founders; and for Sir William Whittington, Knight, and Dame Joan his Wife; and for Hugh Fitzwarren, and Dame Molde his Wife, the

Fathers and Mothers of the said Richard Whittington, and Alice his Wife; for King Richard the Second, and Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, special Lords and Promoters of the said Whittington, &c. It follows in the will, "For Anne and Eleanor, the Wives of the said King and Duke. Furthermore also for the good heel and staat of our aforesaid Lord [King Henry VI.] and Archbishop [Henry Chicheley] that now be, and the Conservators and Benefactors of the same house, while they live; and for our good staat, while we live; and for their souls and ours, when they and we be passed out of this world; and generally for them, to whom the said Richard Whittington and Alice were byhold to in any manerwise while we live, and for all Christen soules."

The licence for this foundation was granted by King Henry IV. the eleventh of his reign; and in the twelfth of the same King's reign, the Mayor and Commonalty of London granted to Richard Whittington a vacant piece of ground, thereon to build his College in the Royal: All which was confirmed by Henry VI. the third of his reign, to John Coventre, Jenkin Carpenter, and William Grove, Executors to Richard Whittington.

This foundation was again confirmed by Parliament the tenth of Henry VI. and was suppressed by the statute of Edward VI. The Alms-houses, with the poor Men, do remain, and are paid by the Mercers.

There are extant, in custody of the Mercers, the original ordinances of Richard Whittington's Charity, made by his Executors, Coventre, Carpenter, and Grove, fairly written: where, on the first page, is curiously allumined the said Whittington lying on his death-bed, a very lean consumed meagre body; and his three Executors, and a Priest, and divers others, standing by his bed-side. They begin thus:

"To alls the trew people of Cryst, that shalle se or here the things which be conteyned within these present Letters, John Coventre, Jenkin Carpentre, and William Grove, &c. Executors of the Testament of the worthy and notable Merchaunt Richard Whittington, late Citezin

and Mercer of the Cite of London, and oftentimes Meyer of the same Cite, sending gretying in our Lord God everlasting.

“The fervent desire and besy intention of a prudent, wyse and devout man, shal be to cast before and make seure the state and thende of the short liffe with dedys of mercy and pite; and namely to provyde for such poure persons, which grevous penure and cruel Fortune have oppressed, and be not of power to gete their lyving either by craft, or by any other bodily labour: Whereby that, at the day of the last Judgement, he may take his part with them that shal be saved. This considering the foresaid worthy and notable Merchaunt Richard Whittington, the which while he leved had ryght liberal and large hands to the needy and poure people, charged streitly, in his death-bed, us his foresaid Executors, to ordeyne a House of Almes after his death, for perpetual sustentation of such poure people as is tofore rehersed; and therupon fully he declared his Wille unto us. And we wylling after our power to fullfil thentent of his commendable Wille and holesome desire in this part, as we be bound:

“First, Yfounded by us, with sufficient authorite, in the Church of Seint Mighells, in the Royolle of London, where the foresaid Richard and Dame Alice his Wife be biried, a commendable Colledge of certain Prestes and Clerkis, to do there every day divine service for the aforesaid Richard and Alice.

“We have founded also, after the Wille abovesaid, a House of Alms for xiii pouer Folk successively for evermore, to dwell and to be sustained in the same House: which House is situated and edified upon a certain soyl that we bought therfore, late in the Parish of Sainte Mighel aforesaid; that is to say, bytwene the foresaid Church and the wall that closeth in the voyd place behind the heigh auter of the same Church in the southside, and our great Tenement, that was the late House of the aforesaid Richard Wyttington, in the northside. And it stretcheth fro the dwelling-place of the Master and the Priestis of the Colledge abovesaid.

The which also we did late to be now added in the east side unto a great voyd place of our land. The which by the Help of God we purpose to do be hal- lowed lawfully for a Churchyard to the same Church within short time in the westside.

“ And in the more ful and clere foundation and or- dinaunce, and also stablyng of the foreseid Almeshouse for pouer Men, the Myght of the Padre, the wysdom of the Sonne, and the goodness of the Holy Ghost, fyrst of al ycalled unto our help, we procede in this wise :

“ Fyrst, both by lycence, graunt and authoritie of the right mighty Prince and Lord K. Henry VI. King of England, of Fraunce that now is ; and also by the will and consent of the ryght worthy Lord and Padre in Cryst, Henry, by the sufferance of God, Arch- bishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, and Le- gate of the See of Rome, of whose jurisdiction im- mediate be the Church and Parrishe abovesaid ; and the graunt and consent of all and every man, that had any title or interest in this partie, before required and had.”

Then the ordinances follow, which were these :

“ To be twelve pouer Folks alonely of Men or Women togiddre ; after the sad discretion and good conscience of the Overseers underwrit, and Conservators of the same House, to be provided and admitted.

“ The which every day, when due and convenient time is, shal pray for evermore for al the now being alive, and also for the bypast, to God ; whose names of great specialty been expressed in these statutes underwrit.

“ To be one Principal, which shal pas al other in power and reverence, and be called Tutour. The office and charge of him shal be the goods of the Almes- house, which shal come to his hands, well and truly to minister ; the goods dissevered to gather again togidre, to the use of the Almes-house ; and the husbandry of the same House, in as much as he may goodly oversee, dispose, or ordain ; inforcing himself to edifie and nourish charity and peace among his Felawes.

“ The poor Folks under the said Tutour evermore shall obey.

“ The thirteen poor Folke to be hable in conversation, and honest in living.

“ The same House to be called for ever God’s House, or Almes-house, or the Hospital of Richard Whittington.

“ The L. Maior to be Overseer of the said Almes-house; and the Keepers of the Commonalty of the Craft of Mercers to be called for evermore Conservators of the foresaid House.

“ The Tutour to have a place by himself, that is to say, a Cell, or little House, with a chimney and a prevy, and other necessaries, in the which he shall lyege and rest; and that he may alon and by himself, without let of any other persoon, intend to the contemplation of God, if he woll.

“ That the seid Tutour and pouer Folke, whan they be in the aforesaid Houses and Cells, and also in the Cloisters, and other places of the foresaid Almes-houses, have hemselve quietlie and pesably, without noise or disturbance of his Felaws; and that they occupy himself in prayer or reading, or in labour of her hondes, or in some other occupations, &c.”

It endeth thus :

“ In Witness we have put to our Seals. Gyven at London, the xxi Day of Decemb. in the Yere of our Lord a thousand CCCC xxiiii. and the Yere of King Henry VI. after the Conquest the thrydde.

“ Go, litel Boke, go litel Tregedie,
Thee lowly submytting to al Correction
Of theym being Maisters now of the Mercery,
Olney, Felding, Boleyne, and of Burton :
Herteley theym beseyking with humble Salutation
Thee to accept, and thus to take in gre,
For evre to be a Servant withyn yeare Comminaltie.”

But further, for the direction of their daily devotion, of their eating, and their habit, these were the appointments and ordinances :

“ Every Tutour and poor Folk every day first whan they rise fro their bedds, kneeling upon their knees, sey a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria, with special and herty recommendation-makeing of the foresaid Richard Whyttington and Alice to God, and our blessed Lady Maidyn Mary : And other times of the day, whan he may best and most commody have leisure thereto, for the staat of al the souls abovesaid, say three or two sauters of our Lady at the least ; that is to say, threies seaven Ave Marias, with xv Pater Nosters, and three Credes : But if he be letted with febleness, or any other reasonable cawse, one in the day at the least, in case it may be ; that is to say, after the messe, or when complyn is don, they come togidder within the college about the tomb of the aforesaid Rich. Whyttington and Alice, and they that can sey shal sey, for the soules of the seid Richard and Alice, and for the soules of al Christen People, this Psalm, De Profundis, with the versicles and orions that longeth thereto. And they that can shal sey three Pater Nosters, three Ave Marias, and on Crede. And, after this doon, the Tutour, or oon of the eldest Men of theym, shal sey openly in English, God have Mercy on our Founders Souls, and al Chrysten ; and they that stond about shal aunswer and sey, Amen.

“ That they be bound to dwell and abide continewally in the seid Almes-house, and bounds thereof ; and that every day, both at meet and soupier, they eet and be fed within the seid Almes-house ; and while they be at meet or soupier, they absteyn thanne from veyn and ydel words ; and if they wol any thyng talk, that it be honest and profitable.

“ That the overclothing of the Tutour and pouer Folk be derk and brown of colour, and not staring ne blaising, and of easy prised, according to their degre.”

These Executors of the Will of Richard Whittington constituted five Chaplains in his College founded in this Church ; which were confirmed by the King in the third of Henry VI.

This Richard Whittington was (in this Church) three times buried: first by his Executors, under a fair monument; then, in the reign of Edward VI. the Parson of that Church, thinking some great riches (as he said) to be buried with him, caused his monument to be broken, his body to be spoiled of his leaden sheet, and again the second time to be buried; and in the reign of Queen Mary, the Parishioners were forced to take him up to lap him in lead, as afore, to bury him a third time, and to place his monument, or the like, over him again; which remained, and so he rested, till the great fire of London violated his resting-place again.

This Church of St. Michael Pater-noster in the Vintry, the Capital House, and Site thereof, called Whittington College, alias Whittington, and one Garden belonging to the same, of the yearly Value of four Pounds, six Shillings, and eight Pence, was sold to Armagill Waad, Clerk of the Council, in the second of Edward VI. for ninety-two Pounds two Shillings.

Sir Richard built the gate and prison of Newgate as it formerly stood; gave large sums to Bartholomew's Hospital; founded a Library in the Grey Friars; endowed Christ's Hospital with a considerable sum; built Guildhall Chapel, and the East End of the Hall.

Dame Alice, his wife, died in the 63d year of her age; after which he never remarried, though he outlived her near 20 years. At last he died like the patriarch, full of age and honor, leaving a good name to posterity; and the following Epitaph was cut on the upper stone of his vault, and continued perfect till destroyed by the fire of London:

M. S.

Beneath this stone lies Whittington,
 Sir Richard rightly nam'd;
 Who three times Lord Mayor serv'd in London,
 In which he ne'er was blam'd.

He rose from Indigence to Wealth,
 By Industry and that,
 For lo! he scorn'd to gain by stealth,
 What he got by a Cat.

Let none who reads this Verse, despair
 Of Providence's Ways:
 Who trust in him, he'll make his Care,
 And prosper all their Days.

Then sing a Requiem to departed merit,
 And rest in Peace till Death demands thy Spirit.



A Tombstone.

THE SLAVES.

SNELLGRAVE was the captain of an English vessel in the African slave trade, commendable for his humanity. Custom alone can authorize this commerce, offensive to nature, and not to be carried on but at the utmost peril, since injustice and tyranny generally produce rebellion and despair. For this reason the Europeans are obliged to put the unhappy Negroes they buy in chains during the night, and most part of the day; notwithstanding which precaution, they often find means to unite, and conspire the destruction of their masters.

Snellgrave bought many Negroes on the banks of the river Kallabar, among whom he observed a young woman seemingly overwhelmed with grief: touched with her tears, he desired his interpreter to question her, and learnt she wept for an only child she had lost the evening before.

She was taken on board the vessel, and the very same day Snellgrave received an invitation to visit the King of the district. Snellgrave accepted the invitation, but knowing the ferocity of that people, he ordered ten of his sailors and the gunner to accompany him, well armed. He was conducted to some distance from the shore, and found the King placed on an elevated seat under the shade of some trees.

The assembly was numerous; a crowd of Negro Lords surrounded their King; and his guard, composed of about fifty men, armed with bows and arrows, the sabre at their side, and the zagaye in their hand, stood at some distance; the English, with muskets on their shoulders, remained opposite his black Majesty.

Snellgrave presented to the King some European trifles. As he was ending his harangue, he heard groans at some little distance that made him shudder, and turning round, perceived a little Negro tied by the leg to a stake stuck in the ground. Two other Negroes, of a hideous aspect, that stood by the side of a hole dug in the earth, armed with hatchets, and clothed in

an uncouth manner, seemed to guard the child; who looked at them weeping, with his little hands raised in a supplicating posture.

The King observing the emotion which this strange spectacle evidently caused in Snellgrave, thought to encourage him, by assuring him, he had nothing to fear from the two Negroes whom he looked at with so much surprize. It is only, said he, with great gravity, a child, whom we are going to sacrifice to the god Egho for the prosperity of the kingdom.

This intelligence made Snellgrave tremble with horror. The English were only twelve men in all; the court and guard of the African Prince were all together above an hundred; but compassion and humanity would not suffer Snellgrave to consider all he had to fear from the number and ferocity of the Barbarians. Let us save this wretched child, my lads, said he, turning towards his crew. Come, follow me.

So saying, he ran to the little Negro, and the English, all animated by the same feelings, as hastily followed. The Negroes, at seeing this, yelled dismally, and fell tumultuously upon the English. Snellgrave presented his pistol, and seeing the King draw back, demanded to be heard.

The King, with a single word, calmed the fury of the Negroes, who stopt and remained motionless, while Snellgrave, by means of his interpreter, explained the motives of his conduct, and ended by entreating the King to sell him the victim. The proposition was accepted, and Snellgrave was determined not to dispute about the price. Happily, however, for him, the Negro King wanted neither gold nor silver, was ignorant of pearls and diamonds, and, thinking he would be sure to ask enough, demanded a necklace of blue glass beads, which was instantly given.

Snellgrave then immediately flew to the innocent little creature he had snatched from death, and drew his cutlass to divide the cord by which its legs were tied. The frightened child thought Snellgrave was going to kill him, and gave a shriek; but Snellgrave took him in his arms with transport, and pressed him to

his bosom. As soon as the child's fears were removed, he smiled and caressed his deliverer; who, full of delicious sensations, and penetrated with tenderness, took leave of the King, and returned to his ship.

When he came on board, he saw the young Negress whom he had bought in the morning; she was ill, and sat weeping beside the surgeon, who, not able to persuade her to eat, obliged her to remain in the open air, for fear she should faint again. The moment Snellgrave and his people passed by her, she turned her head, and perceiving the little Negro in the arms of a sailor, shrieked, rose, and ran to the child, who knew its mother, called to her, and held out its arms.

She clasped her infant to her bosom——Every fatal resolution she had formed, her loss of liberty, the dreadful ills she had suffered, her projects of despair, all were forgotten—she was a mother, and had found her lost child.

She learnt however, from the interpreter, every circumstance of Snellgrave's behaviour; then, still holding her infant in her arms, she ran and threw herself at her benefactor's feet.——Now it is, said she, that I am truly your slave. This night was to have delivered me from bondage; I held you a tyrant, but you have given me more than life, you have given me back my son; you are become my father; henceforth be assured of my obedience; this infant is a dear and certain pledge.

While the woman spoke with all the warmth and energy of the most impassioned gratitude, the interpreter explained her discourse to Snellgrave, who could not receive a sweeter reward for his humanity; which, nevertheless, was productive of other good effects.

He had no more than three hundred slaves on board, to whom the young Negress related her adventure, which, when they had heard, after expressing their admiration by redoubled plaudits, they promised unbounded submission; and, in effect, Snellgrave, during the rest of the voyage, found in them all the respect and obedience a father could receive from his children.

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