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THE HISTORY OF JACK THE GIANT KILLER.



The Giant Carrying off the Cattle

IN the reign of King Arthur, near to the Land's-end of England in the county of Cornwall, lived a worthy farmer who had a son named Jack. He was brisk and of ready wit, and what he could not perform by force, he completed by tact and policy; none could surpass him for the very learned he baffled by his cunning and sharp inventions.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a Giant eighteen feet high, and about three yards in circumference, of a fierce countenance the terror of the neighbouring towns and villages. His habitation was in a cave in the midst of the mount; he would suffer no living thing to be near him. He fed upon other people's cattle, and when he wanted

JACK THE GIANT KILLER.

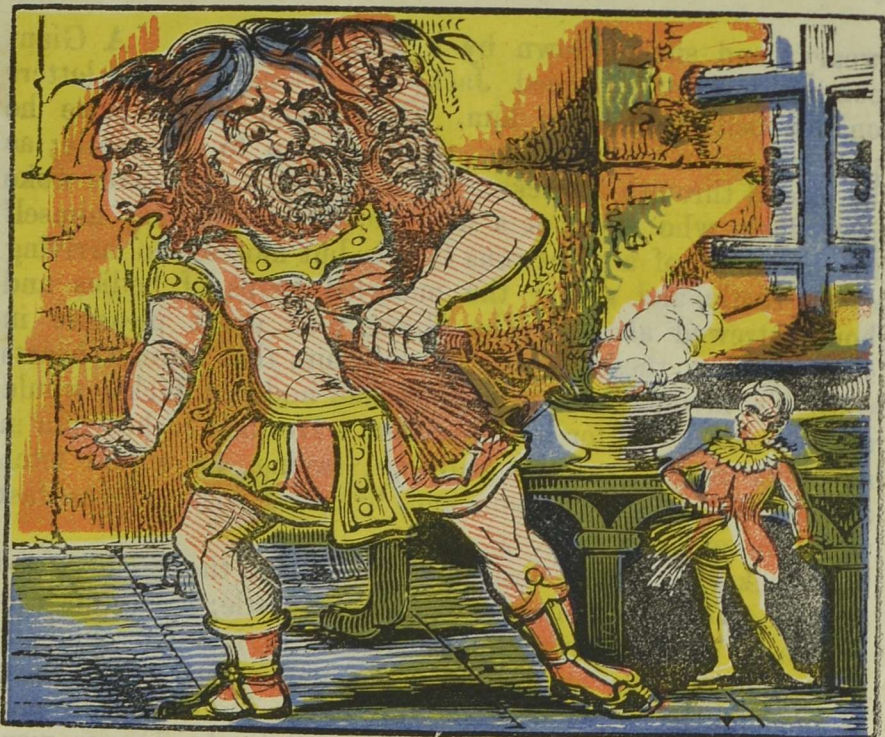


Jack kills the Giant Cormorant when in the Pit.

food he waded over to the main land, where he helped himself to any thing he could find, the people all running away. He made nothing to carry over on his back half a dozen cows and oxen at once; as for ducks and geese, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of candles. This he practised for many years, so that a great part of the county of Cornwall was impoverished by him.

Jack undertook to destroy this monster; so furnishing himself with a horn shovel, and pick axe, over the mountains he went, in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, fell to work, and in the morning had dug a pit twenty feet deep, and almost as broad; covering it over with long sticks and straws, and strewing a little mould over it, it appeared like plain ground; then putting the horn to his mouth he blew tantivy; which noise awoke the Giant, who came roaring towards Jack, crying out, "you incorrigible villain, you shall pay dearly for disturbing me, for I will broil you for my breakfast!" He had scarcely said this, when he tumbled into the pit. "Oh! Mr. Giant," says Jack, "where

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The Welsh Giant imitating Jack's cleverness.

are you now? What do you now think of having for a breakfast?" so saying he struck him such a blow on the crown of his head, that he fell down dead to the bottom of the pit, and Jack shovelled the earth over him as he lay, and then left him.

When the Magistrates heard that Jack had destroyed this enormous Giant, they were delighted, and declared that he should henceforth be called Jack the Giant Killer, and presented him with a superb sword and belt, upon which these words were written in letters of gold:—

Here's the valiant Cornish-man,
Who slew the Giant Cormoran.

The news of Jack's victory soon spread over the western parts and another Giant named Blunderbore, who had heard of it, vowed to destroy him should he ever meet with him.

This Giant kept an enchanted castle in the midst of a dark lone wood.

About four months after, as Jack was walking by the borders of a forest, on his journey into Wales he

weary, and sitting down by a well, fell asleep. A Giant coming for water, espied Jack, and seeing the gold letters on his belt, soon knew him. Overjoyed at his prize he put him over his shoulder, to carry him to the castle; as he passed through a thicket, the rustling of the leaves woke poor Jack, who was not a little terrified at finding himself in the hands of a monstrous Giant, but moreso on arriving at the castle, and seeing the mangled heaps of bodies and bones strewed about. The Giant took great pleasure in shewing him these things, and told him that human hearts were his favourite food, and he had no doubt Jack's would make him a relish for his breakfast. He then locked him in an upper room over the gateway, saying, he would fetch another Giant, a neighbour and friend of his, to breakfast with him off poor Jack.

Jack was almost distracted; he ran to the window, and saw the two Giants coming towards the castle; now, quoth he my death or deliverance is at hand. On looking round the room, he saw some strong ropes, and making a running noose at one end, he put the other through a pulley which happened to be just over the window; while the Giants were unlocking the gate Jack contrived to throw the noose over both their heads, and instantly pulling the rope he managed, though he could not pull them off their feet, to choke them both. This was the hardest job he ever did, for the Giants kicked and spluttered at a rare rate, but at length he was successful, and rejoiced at his deliverance. He then took the Giant's keys, and in searching about the castle found three ladies tied by the hair of their heads, who told Jack the Giant had murdered their husbands. Jack released them and told them he had killed the Giant, so giving them the keys, he departed very well pleased with the termination of his fearful adventure.

Jack having but little money, thought it prudent to travel hard; but losing his way he was benighted, and could find no place of entertainment, until coming to a valley between two hills, he found a very large house in a lonesome place, and being greatly in need of rest and refreshment, he took courage to knock at the gate, when, to his amazement, out came a monstrous Giant with three heads; however he did not seem so fierce as the other giants, but it appeared

that he hid his wickedness under an appearance of civility, as the sequel will prove. Jack told him his distress, and the giant civilly invited him in and gave him a supper, and then shewed him into a bedroom, where he left him. Jack had scarcely got into bed when he heard the giant muttering to himself, apparently very merry:—

Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light,

My club shall dash your brains out quite.

That's your game Mr. Giant, is it! says Jack to himself, then I must endeavour to be even with you. So getting out of bed, he placed a billet of wood (of which there were many in the room) in his place, and then hid himself behind the curtains.

In the middle of the night the giant came with his great club, and thinking it was Jack, belaboured the billet without mercy. After a while he stopped and left the room, laughing to think how he had taken poor Jack in. Early in the morning Jack put on a bold face, and went to thank the giant for his night's lodging. The giant started when he saw him and asked him how he had slept, and if any thing had disturbed him in the night? "Oh no, says Jack nothing worth speaking of; a rat I believe, gave me two or three slaps with his tail, but I soon went to sleep again."

The giant wondered at this, yet did not answer a word, but got two great bowls of hasty-pudding, and putting one before Jack, began eating the other himself. Jack buttoned his leather provision bag inside his coat, and slyly filled it with the hasty-pudding. "Now," says Jack "I'll do what you can't." So he takes a knife and ripping up the bag, let's out the hasty-pudding. "I can do that," says the giant, and instantly ripped up his belly and killed himself.

Jack now started once more on his travels, and on the third day he entered an extensive forest, and presently heard the cries of some one in distress. Hastening towards the spot, he beheld an enormous giant dragging a lady and gentleman by the hair of their heads. His heart melted at the sight, when alighting from his horse, he put on an invisible coat, which he had received as a present from a fairy, and ran up to him, when aiming a blow at his legs, he cut them both off at one stroke, and he fell to the ground with

JACK THE GIANT KILLER.



Jack Saves the Knight and his Lady.

such force that the earth shook under him. The lady and gentleman not only returned their grateful thanks, but wished him to go to their house. "No" said Jack, "I must haste to relieve a duke's daughter, who is enchanted" he then took his leave. The Enchanter lived with a huge giant in a castle on the top of a mountain, guarded by two large Dragons; but Jack put on his invisible coat and got in without being seen. Here he was astonished at the prodigious number of birds and animals, who were all enchanted persons, and after getting past them, he came softly up to the enchanter and cut off his head.

The charm now ceased:—the castle fell to pieces, crushing the giant, and the enchanted persons returned to their proper shapes. Jack released the duke's daughter, and many others. He then set off with the lady for the court of King Arthur, where he was joyfully received, sumptuously entertained, and in a short time had the duke's daughter presented to him in marriage.

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