

THE HISTORY  
OF  
THOMAS  
Wickathrift

THE  
CONQUEROR.

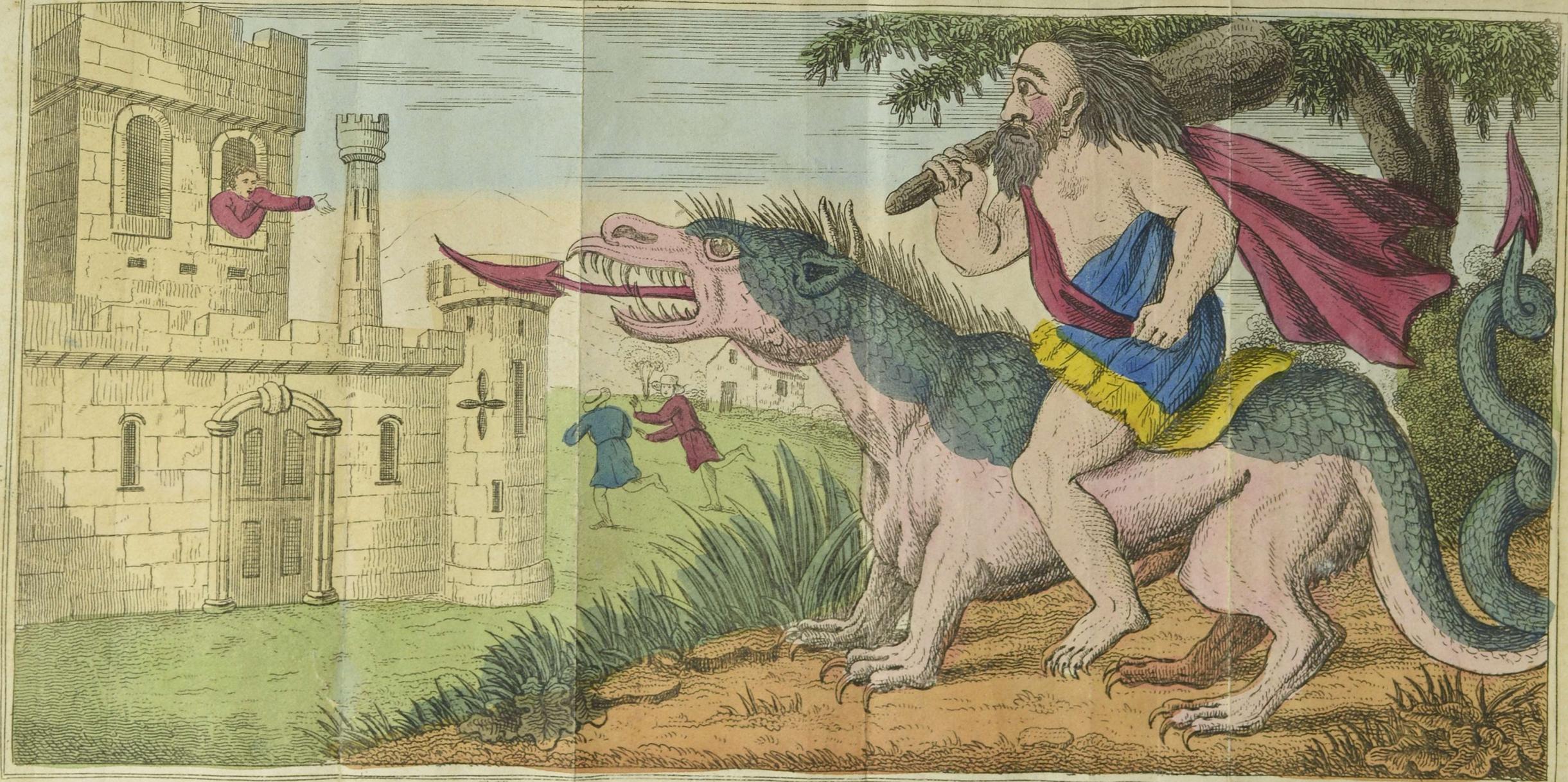
—>—  
IN TWO PARTS.  
—>—

With a Coloured Copper plate Engraving



LONDON:  
Printed for S. Carvalho, 18, West  
place, Nelson-st, City road.

PRICE SIX PENCE.



*MR HICKATHRIFT DESCRIBING THE GIANT  
FROM ONE OF THE WINDOWS OF HIS CASTLE MOUNTED ON A DRAGON*

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**HISTORY**  
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**THOMAS HICKATHRIFT.**

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In the reign of William the Conqueror, of great renown, there lived in the Isle of Ely, in Cambridgeshire, a man named Thomas Hickathrift, a poor labourer, yet he was an honest stout man and able to do as much work in a day, as two ordinary men ; having only one son, he called him after his own name Thomas, the old man put his son to school, but he would not learn anything.

It pleased God to call the old man aside, and his mother being tender of her son, she maintained him by her own labour as well as she could ; but all his delight was in the corner ; and he eat as much at once, as would serve six ordinary men.

At ten years old, he was near six feet high, and three in thickness; his hand was much like a shoulder of mutton, and every other part proportionate; but his great strength was yet unknown.

Tom's mother being a poor widow, went to a rich farmer's house to beg a bundle of straw, to shift herself and her son Thomas. The farmer being an honest charitable man, bid her take what she wanted. She going home to her son Thomas, said, pray go to such a place and fetch me a bundle of straw. I have asked leave. He swore he would not go, Nay, prithee go, said his poor old mother.—Again he swore he would not go, unless she would borrow him a cart rope. She being willing to please him, went and borrowed one.

Then taking up the cart rope away he went, and coming to the farmer's house, the master was in the barn, and two men thrashing.

Said he, I am come for a bundle of straw. Tom, said the farmer, take as much as thou canst carry. So he laid

down his cart rope and began to make up his bundle.

Your rope, Tom, said they, is too short and jeered him. But he fitted the farmer well for his joke; but when he had made up his burden, it was supposed to be near a thousand weight. But said they what a fool thou art, for thou canst not carry the tythe, or tenth part of it. Nevertheless he took up his burden, and made no more of it than we do of an hundred pounnds weight, to the great astonishment of both master and men.

Now Tom's stength beginning to be known in the town, they would not let him lie basking in the chimney corner; every one hiring him to work, seeing he had so much strength, and telling him it was a shame for him to lie idle as he did from day to day; so that Tom finding them bait him as they did, went first to one work and then to another.

One day a man came to him, desiring him to bring a tree home. So Tom went with him and four other men.

Now, when they came to the wood,

they sat the cart by the tree, and began to draw it in by pullies ; but Tom seeing them not able to stir it, said, stand by, fools, and so setting it up one end, then put it into the cart. There, said he, see what a man can do!—Marry, said they, that is true indeed.

Having done, and coming through the wood, they met the woodman, and Tom asked him for a stick, to make his mother a fire with.

Aye, says the woodman, take one.

So Tom took up one bigger than that on the cart, and putting it on his shoulder, walked home with it faster than the six horses in the cart drew the other.

Now, this was the second instance of Tom's shewing his strength, which was equal to that of twenty common men; and from this time Tom began to grow very tractable; he would jump, run, and delight in young company, and would ride to fairs and meetings to see sports and diversions.

One day, going to a wake where the young men were met, some went to

wrestling, and some to cudgels, and some throwing the hammer, with various other diversions.

Tom stood awhile to see the sport, & at last he joined the company throwing the hammer, at length he took the hammer in his hand and felt the weight of it, bidding them stand out of the way for he would try how far he could throw it.

Aye, says the old smith, you will throw it a great way, I warrant you.

Tom took the hammer, and giving it a swing, threw it into a river, four or five furlongs distance, about half a mile and bid them go and fetch it out.

After this, he joined the wrestlers, & though he had no more skill than an ass yet by main strength he flung all he grappled with. If once he but laid hold they were gone; some he threw over his head, and others he laid down gently.

He did not attempt to look or strike at their heels, but threw them two or three yards from him, and sometimes on their heads, ready to break their necks. So that at last none durst enter the ring

to wrestle with him, for they they took him to be some devil among them.

Tom's fame being spread, no one durst give him an angry word. For being fool-hardy he cared not what he did, so that those who knew him would not displease him. At last a brewer at Lyna, who wanted a lusty man to carry beer to the Marsh and to Wisbeach, hearing of him came to hire him but he would not be hired, till his friends persuaded him, and his master promised him a new suit of clothes from top to toe and also that he should be his man and the master shewed him where he should go; for there was a monstrous giant kept part of the Marsh, and none dared to go that way, for if the giant found them, he would either kill them, or make them his servants.

But to come to Tom and his master — Tom did more in one day, than all the rest of his men did in three! so that his master seeing him so tractable and careful in his business, made him his head man, and trusted him to carry beer by

himself, for he needed none to help him, thus he went each day to Wisbeach, a journey of near twenty miles.

But his going this journey so often, and finding the other road that the giant kept nearer by the half, and having increased his strength by being so well kept, and improving his courage by drinking so much strong ale.—One day as he was going to Wisbeach, without saying any thing to his master, or to his fellow servants, he resolved to make the nearest road or lose his life to win the horse, or lose the saddle, to kill or be killed, if he met with this giant.

Thus resolved, he goes the nearest way with his cart, flinging open the gate in order to go through, but the giant soon espied him; and seeing him a daring fellow, vowed to stop his journey, and make a prize of his beer; but Tom cared not a fig for him; and the giant met him like a roaring lion as though he would swallow him up.

Sirrah, said he, who gave you authority to come this way? Do you not

know that I make all stand in fear of my fight? And you like an impudent rogue must come and fling open my gate at pleasure.

Are you so careless of your life, that you do not care what you do? I will make you an example to all rogues under the sun.

Dost thou not see how many heads hang upon yonder tree, that have offended my laws, thine shall hang lighter than any of them all.

None of your prating, said Tom, you shall not find me like them.—No, said the giant, why you are but a fool if you come to fight me, and bring no weapon to defend thyself—Cries Tom, I have got a weapon here shall make you know I am your master,—Say you so, sirrah, said the giant; and then ran to his cave to fetch his club, intending to dash his brains out at a blow.

While the giant was gone for his club he turned his cart upside down, taking his axletree and wheel for his sword and buckler; and excellent weapons they were on such an emergency.

The giant coming out again, began to stare at Tom, to see him take the wheel in one of his hands, and the axletree in the other.

Oh! oh! said the giant, you are like to do great things with those instruments I have a twig here that will beat thee, thy axletree and wheel to the ground.

Now that which the giant called a twig was as thick as a mill post; with this the giant made a blow at him with such force as made his wheel crack.

Tom, not in the least afraid, gave him as brave a blow on the side of the head, which made him reel again,

What, said Tom, have you got drunk with my small beer already; but the giant recovering made many hard blows at him, but still as they came, he kept them off with his wheel; so that he received very little hurt.

In the mean time Tom plied him so well with blows, that sweat & blood run together down the giants face; who being fat and soggy, was almost spent with fighting so long; so begging Tom to let

him drink, and then he would fight him again.

No, no, said he, my mother did not teach me such wit; who is fool then? Whereupon finding the giant grow weak, he redoubled his blows till he brought him to the ground.

The giant finding himself overcome, roared hideously, and begged Tom to spare his life, and he would perform any thing he should desire; even yield himself unto him, and be his servant.

But Tom having no more mercy on him, than a dog upon a bear, laid on him till he found him breathless, and then cut off his head: after which he went into his cave, and there found great store of gold and silver, which made his heart leap for joy.

When he had rummaged the cave, and refreshed himself a little, he restored the wheel and axle-tree to their places and loaded his beer on the cart, and went to Wisbeach, where he delivered his beer, and returned home the same night as he used to do.

Upon his return to his master, he told him what he had done, which though he was rejoiced to hear, he could not believe till he had seen it were true.

Next morning, Tom's master went with him to the place, to be convinced of the truth, as did most of the inhabitants of Lynn.

When they came to the place, they were rejoiced to see the giant quite dead and when Tom shewed them the head and what gold and silver there was in the cave, all of them leaped for joy; for the giant had been a great enemy to that part of the country.

News was soon spread that Tom had killed the giant, and happy was he that could come to see the giant's cave; and bonfires were made all round the country for his success.

Tom by the general consent of the country, took possession of the giant's cave and riches. He pulled down the cave & built himself a handsome house on the spot. He gave part of the giant's lands to the poor for their common,

and the rest he divided & enclosed for an estate to maintain him & his mother,

Now his fame was spread more and more through the country, and he was no longer called plain Tom, but Mr. Hickathrift ; and they feared his anger now almost as much as they did that of the giant before.

Tom now finding himself very rich resolved that his neighbours should be the better for it, he therefore enclosed a park, and kept deer, and just by his house he built a church which he dedicated to be St. James's, because on that Saint's day, he killed the giant.

Tom not being used to have such a stock of riches, could hardly tell how to dispose of it; but he used means to do it, for he kept a pack of hounds, & men to hunt with them, and who but Tom ! He took much delight in sports and other exercises, and he would go far and near to a merry making.

One day as he was riding, he saw a company at foot ball, & dismounted to see them play for a wager ; but he spoiled

all their sport for meeting the football he gave it such a kick that they never saw it more; whereupon they began to quarrel with Tom; but some of them got little good by it; he got a pole which belonged to an old house, that had been blown down, with which he drove all opposition before him, and made way wherever he came.

After this, going home late in the evening he was met by four highwaymen well mounted, who had robbed all the passengers that travelled on that road.

When they saw Tom and found that he was alone, they were cock sure of his money, and bid him stand and deliver.

What must I deliver? cries Tom, Your money, sirrah, said they. Aye said Tom, but you shall give me better words for it first, & be better armed too.

Come come, said they, we came not here to prate, but for your money, and money we must have before we go. Is it so said Tom, then get it and take it.

Whereupon one of them made at him with a rusty sword, which Tom immedi-

ately wrenched out of his hand and attacked the whole four with it, and made them set spurs to their horses; but seeing one of them had a portmanteau behind him, and supposing it contained money he more closely pursued them, and soon overtook them, and cut their journey short killing two of them, and sadly wounding the other two, who begged very hard for their lives, he let them go, but took away their money, which was about two hundred pounds to bear his expences home.

When Tom came home, he told them how he had served the foot-ball players, and the four thieves, which produced much mirth and laughter among all the company.

Some time afterwards, as Tom was walking about his estate, to see how his workmen went on, he met upon the skirts of the forest a very sturdy tinker having a good staff on his shoulder, and a great dog to carry his budget of tools.

So he asked the tinker from whence he came; and whither he was going,

as that was no highway. Now the tinker being a sturdy fellow bid him go look; what was that to him? But fools must always be meddling.

Hold, said Tom, before you and I part, I will make you know who I am.

Aye, said the tinker, it is three years since I had a combat with any man, I have challenged many a one, but none dare face me, so I think they are all cowards in this part of the country; but I hear there is a man lives hereabouts named Thomas Hickathrift, who has killed a giant, him I'd see to have a bout with him.

Aye, said Tom, I am the man, what have you to say to me;—Truly, said the tinker, I am glad me are so happily met, that we may have one touch.

Surely said Tom, you are but in jest, Marry said the tinker, but I am in earnest—A match, said Tom.—It is done said the tinker.—But said Tom, will you give me leave to get a twig.—Aye, said the tinker, I hate him that fights with a man unarmed.

So Tom stepped to the gate, & took a rail for a staff. So to it they went, the tinker at Tom and Tom at the tinker like two giants: the tinker had a leather coat on, so that every blow Tom gave him made it twang again, yet the tinker did not give way an inch till Tom gave him such a bang on the side of the head, as felled him to the ground.

Now tinker, where art thou said Tom? But the tinker being a nimble fellow, leaped up again, and gave Tom a bang which made him reel, and following his blows, took Tom on the other side, which made Tom throw down his weapon, and yield the mastery to the brave tinker.

After this Tom took the tinker home to his house, where we shall leave them to improve their acquaintance, and get themselves cured of the bruises they gave each other.

*End of the First Part.*

## PART II.



In and about the Isle of Ely, many disaffected persons to the number of ten thousand or upwards drew themselves together in a body, pretending to contend for their rights and privileges, which they said had been greatly infringed; insomuch that the civil magistrates of the county thought themselves in great danger of their lives.

Whereupon the sheriff by night, came to the house of Mr. Thomas Hickathrift as a secure place of refuge, in so imminent a time of danger; where he laid open to Mr. Hickathrift the unseasonableness of the complaints of these rebels, and begged his protection and assistance.

Sheriff, said he, what service my brother, (meaning the tinker) and I can perform shall not be wanting.

This said, in the morning by break of day, with trusty clubs, they both went out, desiring the Sheriff to be their guide in conducting to the place where the rebels was.

When they came there, Tom, the tinker, and a few others, marched boldly up to the head of them, and demanded the reason why they disturbed the government? At which they replied, that their will was their law, and by that they would be governed.

Nay, said Tom. if it be so, there are our weapons, and by them thou shalt be chastised. These words were no sooner out of his mouth, but the tinker and him threw themselves both together into the crowd, where with their clubs they beat down all before them. Nay, remarkable it was, the tinker struok a tall man upon the neck with such great force that his head flew off, and was carried ten yards from him, and struck the chief leader with such violence as levelled him to the ground.

Tom on the other hand pressing for-

ward beat down all before him, making great havock, till by an unlucky blow he broke his club; yet he was not in the least dismayed, for he presently seized a stout raw boned miller, and so made use of him for a weapon, till at last they cleared the field, that not one of them durst lift up his head against him.

Shortly after Tom took some of them and exposed them to public justice; the rest being pardoned at the request of Tom and the tinker.

The king being truly informed of the faithful services performed by these his loving subjects, Hickathrift and the tinker, he was pleased to send for them and the nobility.

Now after the banquet the King said these are my trusty and well beloved subjects, men of known courage and valour, who conquered ten thousand persons that were met together to disturb the peace of my realm.

According to the characters given of Tom Hickathrift and Henry Nonsuch, persons here present, which cannot

be matched in all the world; were it possible to have 20,000 of such, I durst immediately venture to act the part of the Great Alexander.

As a proof of my favour, kneel down and receive the order of knighthood, Mr. Hickathrift: and as for Henry Nonsuch I will settle upon him a reward of forty pounds a year during life.

So said; the King withdrew, and Sir Thomas Hickathrift, and Henry Nonsuch, the tinker, returned to their home,—But to the great grief of Sir Thomas Hickathrift, he found his mother dead and buried.

Tom's mother being dead, and he left alone in a spacious house, he found himself strange, therefore he begun to consider with himself, that it would not be amiss to seek a wife; so hearing of a rich and young widow in Cambridge, he goes to her and makes his addresses; and at the first coming she viewed him with much favour; but between that and his coming again, she gave entertainment to an airy, brisk and

young spark, that happened to come in while Tom was there a second time.

He looked very wishfully at him, and he stared as fiercely at him again, so at last the young spark began to abuse him with very affrontive language, saying he was a lubberly scoundrel.

A scoundrel! said he, better sayings would become you, and if you do not instantly mend your manners you will meet with correction.

At which the young man challenged him, so into the yard they went, the young man with his sword, and he with neither stick nor staff.

Said the spark have you nothing to defend yourself? then I shall the sooner dispatch you.

So he made a puss at Tom, but that he put by, and then wheeling round unto his backside gave him such a nice kick in the breech, as sent the Spark like a crow in the air, whence he fell upon the ridge of a thatched house and tumbled into a fish pond, where he had been drowned if it had not been

for a poor shepherd who was walking by that road, and seeing him floating on the water, immediately dragged him out with his hook, and home he returned like a drowned rat, while Tom enjoyed the kind embraces of the lady.

Now the young gallant vexed himself to think that Tom had conquered him before his new mistress, so he was resolved on a speedy revenge, and, as he was not able to cope him, he hired two lusty troopers well mounted, to lie in ambush in a thicket, which he was to pass in his way home, and so accordingly they both set upon him.

How now, rascals! said he, what would ye be at? Are you indeed so weary of your lives, that you so unadvisedly set upon one who is able to crush you like a cucumber? The two troopers laughing at him, said they were not daunted at his high words. High words said Tom, nay, now I will come to the action. and then catching them in his arms, horses and men as easily as if they had been two little baker's bavins.

In this manner he steered homewards but as he passed through a company of haymakers, the troopers cried stop him he runs away with two of the King's troopers; but they laughed to see Tom hugging them, frequently upbraiding them for their baseness, saying he'd make mince meat of them for crows and jack daws.

This was a dreadful sentence for them, and the poor rogues begged he would be merciful to them, and they would discover the whole plot, and who was the person that employed them; which they accordingly did, and gained favour in the sight of Tom, who pardoned them on promising that they would never be concerned in so villainous an action as that for the future.

In regard to the hindrance which Tom had met with the troopers, he delayed his visits to his lady and love till the next day, and coming to her he gave her a full account of what had happened

She was much pleased at this relation and received him with joy and satisfacti-

on, well knowing it was safe for a woman to marry with a man who was able to defend her against any assault whatever, and so brave a man as Tom was found to be.

The day of marriage being appointed and friends and relations invited ; yet secret malice which is never satisfied but with revenge, had like to have prevented it, for having near three miles to go to church, the afore-mentioned gentleman had provided one and twenty ruffians to destroy Tom, or put them to a consternation.

Howbeit, it so happened in a private place ; all bolting out upon him, and with a spear gave him a slight wound, which made his sweetheart shriek out lamentably. Tom endeavoured to pacify her, saying, stand you still and I will shew you some handsome sport.

Then catching hold of a broad sword that belonged to some of the company, he behaved so gallantly with it that at every stroke he took off a joint. He spared their lives, but lopped off their

legs and arms, that in less than a quarter of an hour there was not one in the company but had lost a limb; the grass was all stained with purple gore, and the ground was covered with legs and arms.

His lover and the rest of the company were all this while standing by, and admiring his valour, crying out, O what a set of cripples indeed has he made in a short time.

Yes, said he, I verily believe that for every drop of blood I have lost, I have made the rascals pay me a limb as a just tribute.

This said, he stept to a farmer's house and hired a servant, by giving him twenty shillings to carry the several cripples home to their respective habitations in his dung cart, and then posted to church with his love, when they were heartily merry with their friends after this encounter.

Now Tom being married made a plentiful feast, to which he invited all the poor widows in the parish for

the sake of his mother who had been lately buried.

The feast was carried on with the greatest solemnity, and being ended a silver cup was missing, and being asked about it, they all denied it.

At last, all being searched, the cup was found on an old woman named Stumbelow. Then all the rest were in a rage; some were hanging her, others for chopping the old woman in pieces for her ingratitude to such a generous benefactor.

But he entreated them all to be quiet saying, they should not murder a poor old woman, for he would appoint a punishment for her, which was this;— To bore a hole through her nose, and put a string in it, and ordered her to be stripped naked, then commanded the rest of the old women to stick a lighted candle on her head, and lead her through all the streets and lanes in

Cambridge; which comical sight caused a general laughter, and then she was acquitted.

Now tidings of Tom's wedding was soon raised at court, insomuch that they had a royal invitation there, in order that the king might have a sight of his new married Lady. Accordingly they came, and were received with much joy and triumph.

Whilst they were in the midst of their mirth, news was brought to the King by the commons of Kent, that a very dreadful giant was landed on one of the islands, and had brought with him a great number of bears, and also young lions, with a dreadful dragon, upon which he always rode: which said monster, and ravenous beasts, had much frightened all the inhabitants of the said island. And moreover they said if speedy course was not taken to suppress them in due time, they would destroy the country.

The King hearing of this relation, was a little startled, yet he persuaded them to return home and make the best defence they could for the present, assuring them that he would not forget them and so they departed.

The King hearing these dreadful tidings, immediately sat in council to consider what was the best to be done, to conquer this giant and wild beasts.

At length Tom Hickathrift was pitched upon as being a bold stout subject, for which reason it was judged necessary to make him governor of that Island, which place of trust he readily accepted, and accordingly he went down with his wife and family to take possession of the same, attended by an hundred and odd Knights and Gentlemen at least; they taking leave of him and wishing him all health and prosperity.

Many days he had not been there

before it was his fortune to meet this monstrous Giant for thus it was—Sir Thomas looking out of his own window, espied this giant mounted on a dreadful dragon, and on his shoulder he bore a club of Iron; he had but one eye and that in the centre of his forehead, and was as large as a barber's bason, and seemed like flaming fire; the hair of his head hanging down like snakes, and his beard like rusty wire.

Lifting up his eye he saw Sir Thomas, who was viewing him from one of the windows of the castle. The giant then began to knit his brow and to breathe out some threatening word to the governor, who, indeed was surprised at the approach of such a monstrous and ill favoured brute.

The monstrous giant finding that Tom did not make much haste to get down to him he alighted from his dragon and chained him to a tree; then

marched to the castle, setting his broad shoulders against the corner of the wall, as if he intended to overthrow the whole bulk of the building at once. Tom perceiving it, said, is this the game you would be at: faith I will spoil your sport, he then took the two-handed sword, and flinging open the gate, he there found the giant, who, by an unfortunate slip in his thrusting, was fallen all along, and lay not able to help himself.

How now! said Tom, do you come here to take up your lodging? And with that he ran his long sword between the giant's tawny buttocks and made the brute groan as loud as thunder.

Then Tom pulled out his sword again, and at six or seven blows severed his head, and then turning to the dragon which was all this while chained to a tree, without any further ado, cut off the head of that also.

This adventure being over, he sent for a waggon and horses, and loaded them with the heads, and then summoned all the constables of the country for a safe guard, and then sent them court with a promise to his Majesty, that in a short time he would clear the island of all the bears, lions, &c.

Tom's victories rang so loud, that they reached the ears of his old acquaintance the tinker, who being very desirous of honour, resolved to go down and visit him in his government, and coming there he was kindly entertained.

After a few day's pleasure, Tom told him he must go in search of some bears and lions in the island. Well, said the tinker, I'll go with you. With all my heart said Tom, for I must own I shall be glad of your company. On this they went forward, Tom with his Giants iron club, and the tinker with his pikestaff.

After they had travelled four or five hours, it was their fortune to meet with all the wild beasts together, being in number fourteen, six of which were bears, the other eight young lions.—When these creatures set their eyes on them, they ran furiously, as if they would have devoured them in a mouthful; but Tom and the tinker stood side by side, with their backs against an oak, until the lions and bears came within their reach. Tom with his sword clave all their heads asunder, until they were all destroyed, except one young lion, who seeing the rest of his fellow creatures lay dead, was making his escape, but the tinker being too venturesome, ran hastily after him, and gave the lion a blow. The beast turned upon him and seized him with much violence by the throat, which soon ended his life.

Tom's joy was now mingled with sorrow, for though he had cleared the Island of those venemous beasts; his

grief was intolerable for the loss of his friend.

He returned home to his lady, and in token of joy for the success he had made in his dangerous enterprizes, he made a very noble and splendid feast, to which he invited all his friends and acquaintances, and then made them the following promises :

My friends while I have strength to stand,  
 Most manfully I will pursue.  
 All dangers till I clear the land,  
 Of lions, bears and tigers too,



It was remarkable for the loss of his  
and

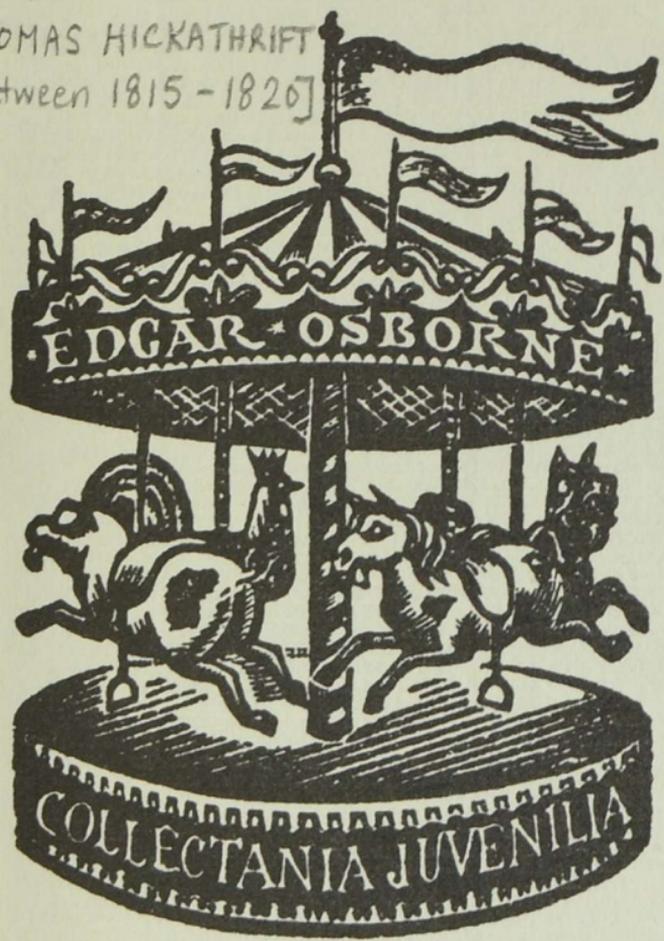
The original frame to the lady, and  
Robert of Troy for the manner he had  
to state his dangerous enterprise, he  
was a very noble and wonderful feat  
which he had set out his friends and  
promises, and had made them the  
of every promise.

It seems to be a story that stands  
that matter I will mention  
All things that I have said  
Of your parts and lines too



(FT) dr

THOMAS HICKATHRIFT  
[between 1815 - 1820]



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