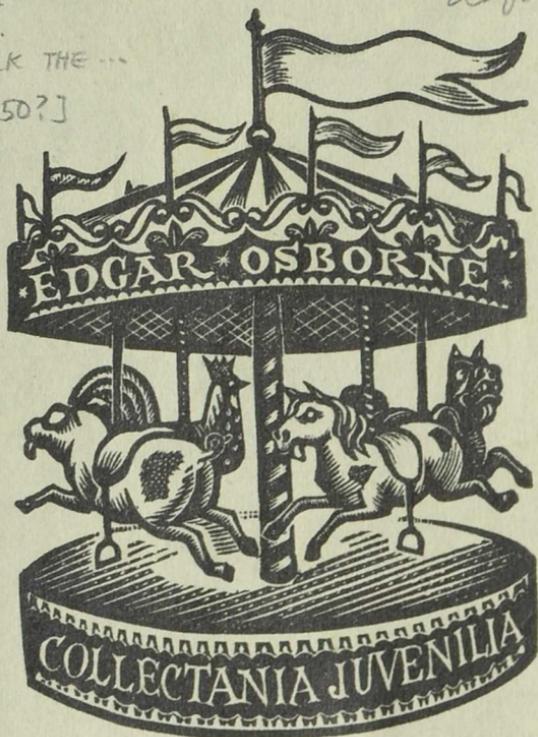




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JACK

THE

GIANT-KILLER.



IN the reign of the most famous King Arthur, there lived near the Land's End of England, in the county of Cornwall, a worthy farmer, who had an only son named Jack. Jack was a boy of a bold temper; he took great pleasure in reading stories of wizards, conjurors, giants, and fairies; and used to listen eagerly while his father talked of the great deeds of the brave knights of King Arthur's Round Table.

When Jack was sent to take care of the sheep and oxen in the fields, he used to amuse himself in planning battles, sieges, and the means to conquer and surprise a foe. He was above the common sports of children; but hardly any one could equal him at wrestling; or, if he met with a match for himself in strength, his skill and address always made him the victor.

In those days there lived on St. Michael's Mount of Cornwall, which rises out of the sea at some distance from the main land, a huge Giant.

He was eighteen feet high, and three yards round; and his savage looks were the terror of all his neighbours.

He dwelt in a gloomy cavern, on the very top of the mountain, and used to wade over to the main land in search of his prey. When he came near, the people left their houses; and after he had glutted his appetite upon their cattle he would throw half a dozen oxen upon his back, and tie three times as many sheep and hogs round his waist, and so march back to his own

abode. The Giant had done this for many years, and the coast of Cornwall was greatly hurt by his thefts, when Jack boldly resolved to destroy him.

Jack therefore took a horn, a shovel, pickaxe, and a dark lantern; and early in a dark winter's evening he swam to the Mount. There he fell to work at once; and before morning he had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and almost as many broad. He covered it at the top with sticks and straw, and strewed some of the earth over them, to make it look just like solid ground. He then put his horn to his mouth, and blew such a loud and long tantivy that the Giant awoke and came towards Jack roaring like thunder, "You saucy villain, you shall pay dearly for breaking my rest, I will broil you for my breakfast."

He had hardly spoken these words, when he came advancing one step farther; but then he tumbled headlong into the pit, and his fall shook the very mountain.

The Giant now tried to rise, but Jack struck him a blow on the crown of his head with his pickaxe which killed him at once. Jack then made haste to rejoice his friends with the news of the Giant's death.

Now when the justices of Cornwall heard of this valiant action, they sent for Jack, and declared that he should always be called Jack the Giant-Killer, and they also gave him a sword and belt, upon which was written in letters of gold,

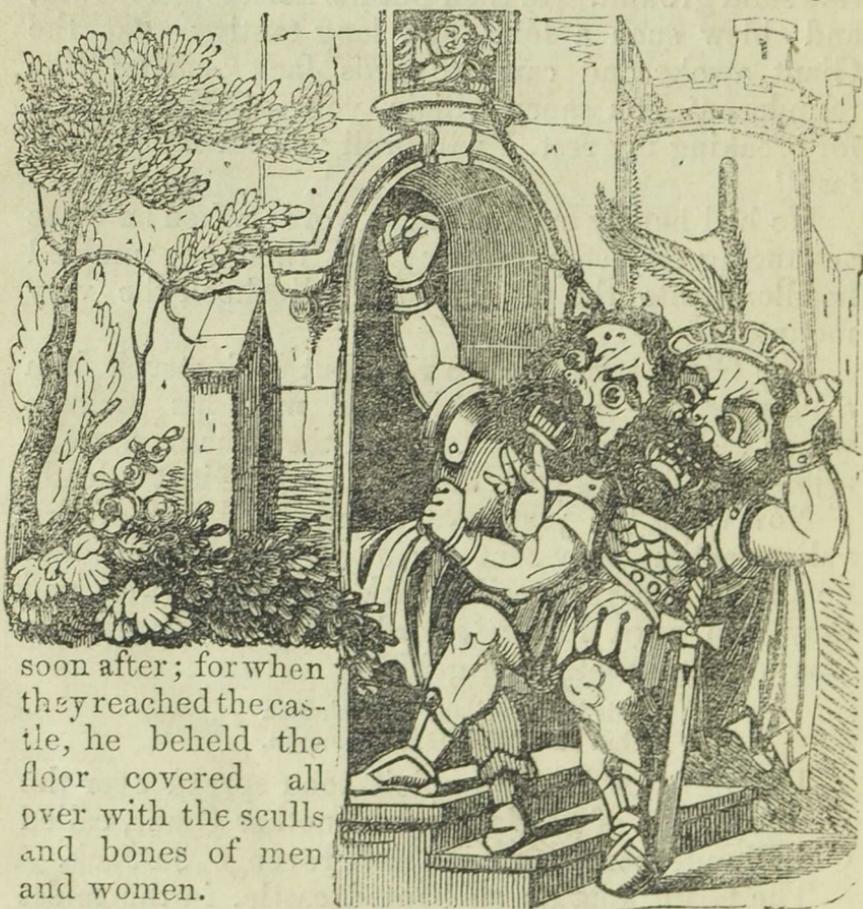
This is the valiant Cornish man
That slew the Giant Cormoran.

The news of Jack's exploit soon spread over the western parts of England, and another Giant, called Old Blunderbore, vowed to have revenge on Jack.

The Giant kept an enchanted castle, in the midst of a lonely wood. Now about four months after the death of Cormoran, as Jack was taking a journey to Wales, he passed through this wood; and being very

weary, he sat down to rest by the side of a very pleasant fountain, and there he fell into a deep sleep.

The Giant came to the fountain for water just at this time, and found Jack there; and as the lines on Jack's belt shewed who he was, the Giant lifted him up, and laid him gently on his shoulder, to carry him to his castle. But as he passed through the thicket, the rustling of the leaves awoke Jack; and he was sadly afraid when he found himself in the clutches of Blunderbore. Yet this was nothing to his fright



soon after; for when they reached the castle, he beheld the floor covered all over with the skulls and bones of men and women.

The Giant took him into a large room, where lay the hearts and limbs of persons that had been lately killed; and he told Jack, with a horrid grin, that men's hearts eaten with pepper and vinegar,

were his nicest food ; and also, that he thought he should make a dainty meal on his heart. When he had said this, he locked Jack up in that room, while he went to fetch another Giant who lived in the same wood, to enjoy a dinner off Jack's flesh with him. Jack was almost distracted ; he ran to the window, and saw the two Giants coming along arm in arm. The window was right over the castle-gate. " Now," thought Jack, " either my death or my freedom is at hand."

Now, there were two strong cords in the room, of which Jack made two large nooses, with a slip-knot at the end of each ; and as the Giants were coming through the iron gates, he threw it over their heads. He then made the other ends fast to a beam in the ceiling, and pulled with all his might, till he strangled them. When he saw they were both quite black in the face, he drew his sword, slid down the ropes, and killed them ; thus he saved himself from the cruel death they meant to put him to.

Jack next took a great bunch of keys from the pocket of Blunderbore, and went into the castle. He made strict search through all the rooms, and found three ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, and almost starved to death. They told him that their husbands had been killed by the Giants, who had condemned them to be starved to death, because they would not partake of the flesh of their own dead husbands.

" Ladies," said Jack, I have put an end to the monster and his wicked brother ; and I give you this castle, and all the riches it contains, to make some amends for the dreadful pains you have felt." He then very politely gave them the keys, and went on his journey to Wales.

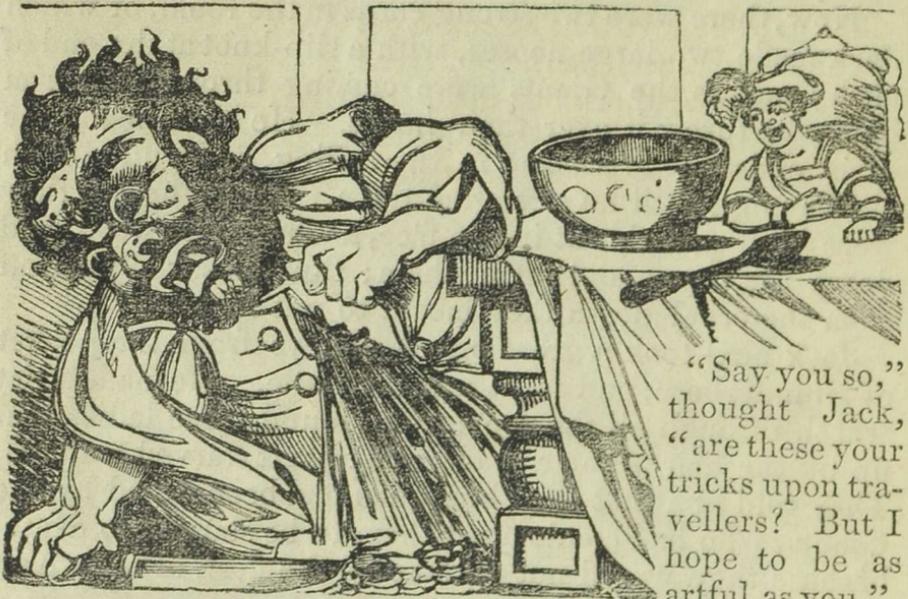
As Jack had not taken any of the Giant's riches for himself, and had very little money of his own, he thought it best to travel as fast as he could. He proceeded till he came to a handsome house in a lonely valley between two mountains.

Jack went up to it boldly, and knocked loudly at the gate ; when, to his great surprise, there came forth a monstrous Giant. Jack told him that he was a traveller who

had lost his way, on which the monster made him welcome, and led him into a room where there was a good bed.

Jack took off his clothes quickly; but though he was weary, he could not sleep. Soon after this, he heard the Giant walking backwards and forwards in the next room, and saying,

“Though here you stay with me to-night
You shall not see the morning’s light,
My club shall dash your brains out quite.”



“Say you so,”
thought Jack,
“are these your
tricks upon tra-
vellers? But I
hope to be as
artful as you.”

Then getting out of bed, he groped about the room, and at last found a thick billet of wood. He laid it in his own place, under the coverlet, and then hid himself under the bed, quite out of sight and danger.

In the middle of the night, the sly Giant came with his great club, and struck many heavy blows on the bed, in the very place where Jack had laid the billet; and the Giant then went back to his own room, thinking he had broken all Jack’s bones.

Early in the morning Jack got up, and walked into the Giant’s room to thank him for his lodging. The Giant started when he saw him, and said, “Pray, how did you sleep last night? Did anything disturb you?”

“Nothing worth speaking of,” said Jack, carelessly;

"a rat, I believe, gave me three or four slaps with his tail, and disturbed me a little; but I soon went to sleep again."

The Giant wondered more and more at this, yet he did not answer a word, but went to fetch two great bowls of hasty-pudding for their breakfast. Jack wanted to make the Giant believe that he could eat as much as himself; so he contrived to button a leathern bag inside his coat, and slipped the hasty-pudding into the bag, while he seemed to put it into his mouth.

When breakfast was over, he said to the Giant, "Now, I will shew you a fine trick. I can cure all wounds with a touch. I could cut off my head in a minute, and the next one put it on again. You shall see an example." He then took hold of a knife, ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty-pudding tumbled out upon the floor.

"Odds splutter hur nails," cried the Giant, who was ashamed to be



outdone by such a little fellow as Jack, "hur can do that hursel," so snatching up the knife, he plunged it into his own stomach, and he dropped down dead in a moment.

Jack soon after continued his travels, and in a few days overtook King Arthur's only son, who had got his father's leave to travel into Wales, to deliver a beautiful lady from the power of a wicked magician.

When Jack found that the young prince had no servants with him, he begged leave to attend him: the prince at once agreed to this, and gave Jack many thanks for his kindness.

Night came on, and the prince began to be uneasy at thinking where they should lodge. "Sir," said Jack, "be of good cheer; two miles further there lives a Giant, whom I know well; he has three heads, and can fight five hundred men, and make them fly before him."

"Alas!" replied the prince, "we had better never had been born than meet with such a monster." "My lord," said Jack, "leave me to manage him; and wait till I return." Jack rode on at full speed, and when he came to the castle-gate he gave a loud knock.

The Giant, with a voice like thunder, roared out, "Who is there?" Jack made answer, "No one, but your poor cousin Jack." "Well," said the Giant, "what news cousin?" "Dear uncle," said Jack, "heavy news." "Pooh," said the the Giant, "what heavy news can come to me?" "Alas!" said Jack, "the prince is coming with two thousand men, to kill you and destroy the castle." "Oh! cousin Jack," said the Giant, "this is heavy news indeed; but I have a large cellar under ground, where I will hide myself; and you shall lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys till the prince is gone."

Now, when Jack had made the giant fast in the vault, he went back, and fetched the prince to the castle, and they both made themselves merry with the wines and other dainties that were in the castle.

Early the next morning, Jack gave the prince gold and silver out of the Giant's treasure, and set him three miles forward on his journey.

He then went back to let his uncle out of the cellar, who

asked what reward he should give him for saving his castle. "Why, good uncle," said Jack, "I desire nothing but the old coat and rusty sword and slippers, that are hanging at your bed's head." "Then," said the giant, "you shall have them; and pray keep them for my sake, for they are things of great use. The coat will keep you invisible, the sword cuts through anything, and the shoes are of vast swiftness; these may be useful to you in times of danger; so take them with all my heart." Jack gave many thanks, and then set off to join the prince.

After he had overtaken the prince, they arrived at the dwelling of the beautiful lady, who was under the power of a wicked magician. She received the prince very kindly, and made a noble feast for him: and when it was ended, she arose, and wiping her mouth with a fine handkerchief,

said, "My Lord you must submit to the custom of my palace; I command you to tell me, to-morrow morning, to whom



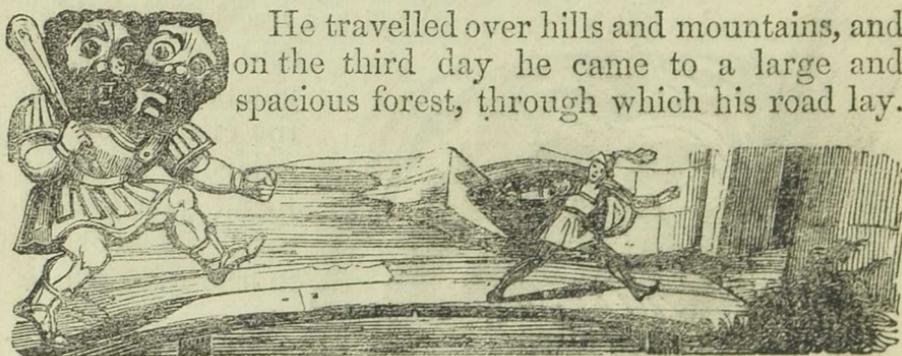
I am to give this handkerchief, or you will lose your head." She then went out of the room, and the prince and Jack soon after retired, each to their respective room.

The prince went to bed very mournful; but Jack put on his cap of knowledge, which told him, that the lady was forced, by the power of enchantment, to meet the magician

every night in the middle of the forest. He now put on his invisible coat, and his shoes of swiftness, and was there before her. When the lady came, she gave the handkerchief to the magician. Jack, with his sword of sharpness, at one blow, cut off his head. The enchantment ended in a moment; and the lady was married to the prince the next day.

As Jack had been so lucky in all his adventures, he resolved not to be idle for the future, but still to do what service he could for the honour of his country. "For," said he to the King, "many giants yet live among the mountains, in the remote parts of Wales, to the great terror and annoyance of your Majesty's subjects; therefore, if it please you, I will soon rid your kingdom of all these monsters in human shape."

He travelled over hills and mountains, and on the third day he came to a large and spacious forest, through which his road lay.



Scarcely had he entered the forest, when on a sudden he heard very dreadful shrieks and cries. He pressed on through the trees, and beheld a monstrous Giant, dragging along by the hair of their heads, a handsome knight and his beautiful lady. Their tears and cries melted the heart of honest Jack to pity and compassion; he alighted from his horse, and tying it to an oak tree, put on his invisible coat, 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 such force as to make the earth shake.

"Now," said Jack, "I cannot be at ease until I find out the den that this monster inhabited."

The knight hearing this grew sorrowful, and replied, "Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second hazard; this monster lived in a den, under yon mountain, with a brother

of his, more cruel than himself; therefore let me persuade you to go with us."

"Nay," answered Jack, "if there be another, even if there be twenty, I would shed the last drop of blood in my body, before one of them should escape me."

Jack had not rode above a mile and a half, before he came within sight of the cavern, near the entrance of which he beheld the other Giant sitting on a huge block of timber, with a knotted iron club in his hand, waiting the return of his brother, loaded with his barbarous prey.

Jack alighted from his horse, and put him into a thicket, then, with his coat of darkness, he approached somewhat nearer. The giant could not see his foe, by reason of his invisible coat; so coming close to him, Jack struck a blow at his head with the sword of sharpness, which killed him on the spot. He then cut off his head, and sent it, with that of his brother, whom he had killed in the forest, to King Arthur, by a waggon which he hired for that purpose.

Jack mounted his horse and proceeded on his journey. He arrived at the knight's house about noon, where he was received with every demonstration of joy imaginable, by the grateful knight and the beautiful lady; who, in honour of Jack's victory, gave a splendid entertainment. When the company were assembled, the knight related the noble exploit of Jack, and presented him, as a token of his gratitude, with a most magnificent ring, on which was engraven the picture of the Giant dragging the knight and his lady by the hair, with a motto round it.

Mirth increased, and the hall resounded with peals of laughter and joyful acclamations. But, suddenly a herald, breathless with haste and terror, rushed into the midst of the company, and told them that Thundol, a Giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his kinsmen, was come from the north to be revenged upon Jack, and that he was within a few miles of the house, the country people all flying before him like chaff before the wind. At these tidings the undaunted Jack brandished his sword, and said, "Let him come, I will soon show him that I have a rod to chastise him also."



The good knight's house was situate on an island, encompassed with a moat fifteen feet deep, and twenty wide, over which was a draw-bridge. Jack employed two men to cut the bridge almost to the middle; and then putting on his invisible coat, he went out against the Giant, with his sword of sharpness. As he came close up to him, though he could not see him by reason of his invisible coat, yet he was sensible of some impending danger, which made him cry out:—

“Fe, fa, fo, fum;
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
If he's alive, or if he be dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.”

“Say you so?” said Jack, “you are a monstrous miller, indeed.” “Art thou,” cried the Giant, “the villain who killed my kinsmen! Then I will tear thee with my teeth, and grind thy bones to powder.” “You must catch me first,” cried Jack; and throwing off his coat of darkness, and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he began to run. The furious Giant stalking after him like a walking castle, made the earth shake at every step he took. Jack then ran over the draw-bridge, the Giant still pursuing him; but coming to the middle, where the bridge had been cut on each side by Jack's order, with the very great weight of his body, and the vast steps he took, it broke, and he tumbled into the water, and

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

rolled about like a large whale. Jack jeered him for some time; and at last ordered a cart-rope to be brought him, he cast it over the Giant's heads, and by the help of horses he dragged him on shore and cut off the monster's heads.

After staying with the knight for some time, he grew weary of such an idle life, and set out again in search of new adventures. He went over hills and dales till he came to the foot of a very high mountain, where lived a venerable old man, with a head white as snow. "My son," said the hermit, "I know you are the famous conquerer of Giants. Now, on the top of a mountain is an enchanted castle, kept by a rich Giant, named Golligantus, who, with a vile magician, gets many knights and fair ladies into his castle, where he changes them into shapes of beasts and birds. Jack promised that in the morning, he would destroy the enchantment, and then retired to rest. Jack arose early the next morning, put on his invisible coat, and departed on his perilous enterprise.

When he arrived at the castle gate, he found it guarded by a gigantic porter. By the side of the door was suspended a golden trumpet, and beneath, written these lines:

"Whoever can this trumpet blow
Shall cause the Giant's overthrow."

Jack was hastening towards the trumpet, when, all of a sudden, he beheld two fierce lions crouched one at each side of the door; but mustering courage, Jack went silently towards them, and aimed a blow at the lions which killed them on the spot, Jack then seized the trumpet, and blew a loud blast, which made the gates fly open, and the castle vanished away like smoke. Jack, with his sword of sharpness, killed the Giant; and the magician was carried away in a whirlwind.

Every knight and lady, who had been changed into beasts and birds, instantly recovered their proper shapes. After this Jack cut off the head of Golligantus, and sent it to the King.

Jack's fame had now spread through the whole country; and, at the King's desire, the Duke gave him his lovely daughter in marriage, to the great joy of all the kingdom.

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