

THE HISTORY OF JACK AND THE BEANSTALK.

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In the days of King Alfred there lived a poor woman whose cottage was situated in a remote country village, a great many miles from London.

She had been a widow some years, and had an only child named Jack, whom she indulged to a fault. The consequence of her blind partiality was, that Jack did not pay the least attention to anything she said, but was indolent, careless, and extravagant. His follies were not owing to a bad disposition, but that his mother had never checked him. By degrees she disposed of all she possessed—scarcely anything remained but a cow.

The poor woman one day met Jack with tears in her eyes. Her distress was great, and, for the first time in her life, she could not help reproaching him, saying—

“O you wicked child! by your ungrateful course of life you have at last brought me to beggary and ruin. Cruel, cruel boy! I have not [130] money enough to purchase even a bit of bread for another day. Nothing now remains to sell but my poor cow. I am sorry to part with her. It grieves me sadly, but we must not starve.”

For a few minutes Jack felt a degree of remorse, but it was soon over, and he began teasing his mother to let him sell the cow at the next village so much, that she at last consented.

As he was going along he met a butcher, who inquired why he was driving the cow from home. Jack replied he was going to sell it. The butcher held some curious beans in his hat that were of various colours and attracted Jack’s notice. This did not pass unnoticed by the butcher, who, knowing Jack’s easy temper, thought now was the time to take advantage of it, and, determined not to let slip so good an opportunity, asked what was the price of the cow, offering at the same time all the beans in his hat for her. The silly boy could not conceal the pleasure he felt at what he supposed so great an offer. The bargain was struck instantly, and the cow exchanged for a few paltry beans. Jack made the best of his way home, calling aloud to his mother before he reached the house, thinking to surprise her.

When she saw the beans and heard Jack’s account, her patience quite forsook her. She kicked the beans away in a passion—they flew in all directions—some were scattered in the garden. Not having [131] anything to eat, they both went supperless to bed.

Jack awoke very early in the morning, and seeing something uncommon from the window of his bed-chamber, ran downstairs into the garden, where he soon discovered that some of the beans had taken root and sprung up surprisingly. The stalks were of an immense thickness, and had so entwined that they formed a ladder nearly like a chain in appearance.

Looking upwards, he could not discern the top. It appeared to be lost in the clouds. He tried the stalk, found it firm, and not to be shaken. He quickly formed the resolution of endeavouring to climb up to the top in order to seek his fortune, and ran to communicate his intention to his mother, not doubting but she would be equally pleased with himself. She declared he should not go; said it would break her heart if he did; entreated and threatened, but all in vain.

Jack set out, and, after climbing for some hours, reached the top of the beanstalk, fatigued and quite exhausted. Looking around, he found himself in a strange country. It appeared to be a desert, quite barren, not a tree, shrub, house, or living creature to be seen. Here and there were scattered fragments of stone, and at unequal distances small heaps of earth were loosely thrown together.

Jack seated himself, pensively, upon a block of stone, and thought of his mother. He reflected^[132] with sorrow on his disobedience in climbing the beanstalk against her will, and concluded that he must die of hunger.

However, he walked on, hoping to see a house where he might beg something to eat and drink. Presently a handsome young woman appeared at a distance. As she approached Jack could not help admiring how beautiful and lively she looked. She was dressed in the most elegant manner, and had a small white wand in her hand, on the top of which was a peacock of pure gold.

While Jack was looking, with the greatest surprise, at this charming female, she came up to him, and, with a smile of the most bewitching sweetness, inquired how he came there. Jack related the circumstance of the beanstalk. She asked him if he recollected his father. He replied he did not, and added there must be some mystery relating to him, because if he asked his mother who his father was she always burst into tears and appeared to be violently agitated, nor did she recover herself for some days after. One thing, however, he could not avoid observing on these occasions, which was, that she always carefully avoided answering him, and even seemed afraid of speaking, as if there were some secret connected with his father's history which she must not disclose.

The young woman replied—

“I will reveal the whole story. Your mother^[133] must not do so. But before I begin I require a solemn promise on your part to do what I command. I am a fairy, and, if you do not perform exactly what I desire, you will be destroyed.”

Jack was frightened at her menaces, and promised to fulfil her injunctions exactly, and the fairy thus addressed him—

“Your father was a rich man. His disposition was very benevolent. He was very good to the poor, and constantly relieved them. He made it a rule never to let a day pass without doing good to some person. On one particular day in the week he kept open house, and invited only those who were reduced and had lived well. He always presided himself, and did all in his power to render his guests comfortable. The rich and the great were next invited. The servants were all happy and greatly attached to their master and mistress. Your father, though only a private gentleman, was as rich as a prince, and he deserved all he possessed, for he only lived to do good. Such a man was soon known and talked of. A giant lived a great many miles off. This man was altogether as wicked as your father was good. He was, in his heart, envious, covetous, and cruel, but he had the art of concealing those vices. He was poor, and wished to enrich himself at any rate.

“Hearing your father spoken of, he formed the design of becoming acquainted with him, hoping to [134] ingratiate himself into your father’s favour. He removed quickly into your neighbourhood, and caused it to be reported that he was a gentleman who had just lost all he possessed by an earthquake and had found it difficult to escape with his life. His wife was with him. Your father gave credit to his story and pitied him. He gave him handsome apartments in his own house, and caused him and his wife to be treated like visitors of consequence, little imagining that the giant was undertaking a horrid return for all his favours.

“Things went on this way for some time, the giant becoming daily more impatient to put his plan in execution. At last a favourable opportunity presented itself. Your father’s house was at some distance from the sea-shore, but with a glass the coast could be seen distinctly. The giant was one day using the telescope; the wind was very high, and he saw a fleet of ships in distress off the rocks. He hastened to your father, mentioned the circumstance, and eagerly requested he would send all the servants he could spare to relieve the sufferers.

“Every one was instantly despatched, except the porter and your nurse. The giant then joined your father in the study, and appeared to be delighted. He really was so. Your father recommended a favourite book, and was handing it down, when the giant, taking the opportunity, stabbed him, and he instantly fell down dead. The giant [135] left the body, found the porter and nurse, and presently despatched them, being determined to have no living witnesses of his crimes.

“You were then only three months old. Your mother had you in her arms in a remote part of the house, and was ignorant of what was going on. She went into the study, but how was she shocked on discovering your father dead. She

was stupefied with horror and grief, and was motionless. The giant, who was seeking her, found her in that state, and hastened to serve her and you as he had done your father, but she fell at his feet, and, in a pathetic manner, besought him to spare her life and yours.

“Remorse, for a moment, seemed to touch the barbarian’s heart. He granted your lives, but first he made her take a most solemn oath never to inform you who your father was, or to answer any questions concerning him, assuring her that if she did he would certainly discover her and put both of you to death in the most cruel manner. Your mother took you in her arms and fled as quickly as possible. She was scarcely gone when the giant repented he had suffered her to escape. He would have pursued her instantly, but he had to provide for his own safety, as it was necessary he should be gone before the servants returned. Having gained your father’s confidence he knew where to find all his treasure. He soon loaded himself and his wife, set the house[136] on fire in several places, and, when the servants returned, the house was burnt quite down to the ground.

“Your poor mother, forlorn, abandoned, and forsaken, wandered with you a great many miles from this scene of desolation. Fear added to her haste. She settled in the cottage where you were brought up, and it was entirely owing to her fear of the giant that she never mentioned your father to you.

“I became your father’s guardian at his birth, but fairies have laws to which they are subject as well as mortals. A short time before the giant went to your father’s I transgressed. My punishment was a suspension of power for a limited time—an unfortunate circumstance—for it totally prevented my succouring your father.

“The day on which you met the butcher, as you went to sell your mother’s cow, my power was restored. It was I who secretly prompted you to take the beans in exchange for the cow.

“By my power the beanstalk grew to so great a height and formed a ladder. I need not add I inspired you with a strong desire to ascend the ladder.

“The giant lives in this country, and you are the person appointed to punish him for all his wickedness. You will have dangers and difficulties to encounter, but you must persevere in avenging the death of your father, or you will not prosper in any of your undertakings, but be always miserable.

[137]

“As to the giant’s possessions, you may seize on all you can, for everything he has is yours though now you are unjustly deprived of it. One thing I desire. Do

not let your mother know you are acquainted with your father's history till you see me again.

“Go along the direct road, and you will soon see the house where your cruel enemy lives. While you do as I order you I will protect and guard you, but, remember, if you dare disobey my commands, a most dreadful punishment awaits you.”

When the fairy had concluded, she disappeared leaving Jack to pursue his journey. He walked on till after sunset when, to his great joy, he espied a large mansion. This agreeable sight revived his drooping spirits, and he redoubled his speed, and soon reached the house. A plain-looking woman was at the door, and Jack accosted her, begging she would give him a morsel of bread and a night's lodging.

She expressed the greatest surprise at seeing him, and said it was quite uncommon to see a human being near their house, for it was well known her husband was a large and very powerful giant, and that he would never eat anything but human flesh, if he could possibly get it; that he did not think anything of walking fifty miles to procure it, usually being out the whole day for that purpose.

This account greatly terrified Jack, but still he [138] hoped to elude the giant, and therefore he again entreated the woman to take him in for one night only, and hide him where she thought proper. The good woman at last suffered herself to be persuaded, for she was of a compassionate and generous disposition, and took him into the house.

First they entered a fine large hall, magnificently furnished. They then passed through several spacious rooms, all in the same style of grandeur, but they appeared to be quite forsaken and desolate.

A long gallery was next. It was very dark, with just light enough to show that, instead of a wall, on one side there was a grating of iron which parted off a dismal dungeon, from whence issued the groans of those poor victims whom the cruel giant reserved in confinement for his own voracious appetite.

Poor Jack was half dead with fear, and would have given the world to have been with his mother again, for he now began to fear that he should never see her more, and gave himself up for lost. He even mistrusted the good woman, and thought she had let him into the house for no other purpose than to lock him up among the unfortunate people in the dungeon.

At the further end of the gallery there was a spacious kitchen, and a very excellent fire was burning in the grate. The good woman bade Jack sit down, and gave him plenty to eat and drink. Jack, [139] not seeing anything here to

make him uncomfortable, soon forgot his fear, and was just beginning to enjoy himself when he was aroused by a loud knocking at the street-door, which made the whole house shake. The giant's wife ran to secure Jack in the oven and then went to let her husband in.

Jack heard him accost her in a voice like thunder, saying—

“Wife, I smell fresh meat.”

“Oh, my dear,” replied she, “it is nothing but the people in the dungeon.”

The giant appeared to believe her, and walked into the very kitchen where poor Jack was concealed, who shook, trembled, and was more terrified than he had yet been.

At last the monster seated himself quietly by the fireside, whilst his wife prepared supper. By degrees Jack recovered himself sufficiently to look at the giant through a small crevice. He was quite astonished to see what an amazing quantity he devoured, and thought he would never have done eating and drinking. When supper was ended the giant desired his wife to bring him his hen. A very beautiful hen was brought and placed on the table before him. Jack's curiosity was very great to see what would happen. He observed that every time the giant said “Lay,” the hen laid an egg of solid gold.

The giant amused himself a long while with his[140] hen, and meanwhile his wife went to bed. At length the giant fell asleep by the fireside and snored like the roaring of a cannon. At daybreak Jack, finding the giant still asleep, and not likely to awaken soon, crept softly out of his hiding-place, seized the hen, and ran off with her.

He met with some difficulty in finding his way out of the house, but, at last, he reached the road in safety. He easily found his way to the beanstalk and descended it better and quicker than he had expected. His mother was overjoyed to see him. He found her crying bitterly, and lamenting his hard fate, for she concluded he had come to some shocking end through his rashness.

Jack was impatient to show his hen, and inform his mother how valuable it was.

“And now, mother,” said Jack, “I have brought home that which will make us rich, and I hope to make some amends for the affliction I have caused you through my idleness, extravagance, and folly.”

The hen produced as many golden eggs as they desired, which Jack and his mother sold, and so in a little time became possessed of as much riches as they wanted.

For some months Jack and his mother lived very happily together, but he, being very desirous of travelling, recollecting the fairy's commands, and fearing that if he delayed she would put her threats into execution, longed to climb the beanstalk and [141] pay the giant another visit, in order to carry away some more of his treasure, for, during the time that Jack was in the giant's mansion, while he lay concealed in the oven, he learned, from the conversation that took place between the giant and his wife, that he possessed some wonderful curiosities. Jack thought of his journey again and again, but still he could not summon resolution enough to break it to his mother, being well assured she would endeavour to prevent his going. However, one day he told her boldly that he must take a journey up the beanstalk. His mother begged and prayed him not to think of it, and tried all in her power to dissuade him. She told him that the giant's wife would certainly know him again, and the giant would desire nothing better than to get him into his power, that he might put him to a cruel death in order to be revenged for the loss of his hen.

Jack, finding that all his arguments were useless, pretended to give up the point, though he was resolved to go at all events. He had a dress prepared which would disguise him, and something to colour his skin, and he thought it impossible for any one to recollect him in this dress.

In a few mornings after this, he rose very early, changed his complexion, and, unperceived by any one, climbed the beanstalk a second time. He was greatly fatigued when he reached the top, and very hungry.

[142]

Having rested some time on one of the stones, he pursued his journey to the giant's mansion. He reached it late in the evening, and found the woman at the door as before. Jack addressed her, at the same time telling her a pitiful tale, and requesting she would give him some victuals and drink, and also a night's lodging.

She told him (what he knew very well before) about her husband's being a powerful and cruel giant and also how she one night admitted a poor, hungry, friendless boy, who was half dead with travelling, and that the ungrateful fellow had stolen one of the giant's treasures, ever since which her husband had been worse than before, had used her very cruelly, and continually upbraided her with being the cause of his loss.

Jack was at no loss to discover that he was attending to the account of a story in which he was the principal actor. He did his best to persuade the old woman to admit him, but found it a very hard task.

At last she consented, and as she led the way Jack observed that everything was just as he had found it before. She took him into the kitchen, and after he

had done eating and drinking, she hid him in an old lumber closet. The giant returned at the usual time, and walked in so heavily that the house was shaken to the foundation. He seated himself by the fire, and, soon after, exclaimed—

[143]

“Wife, I smell fresh meat.”

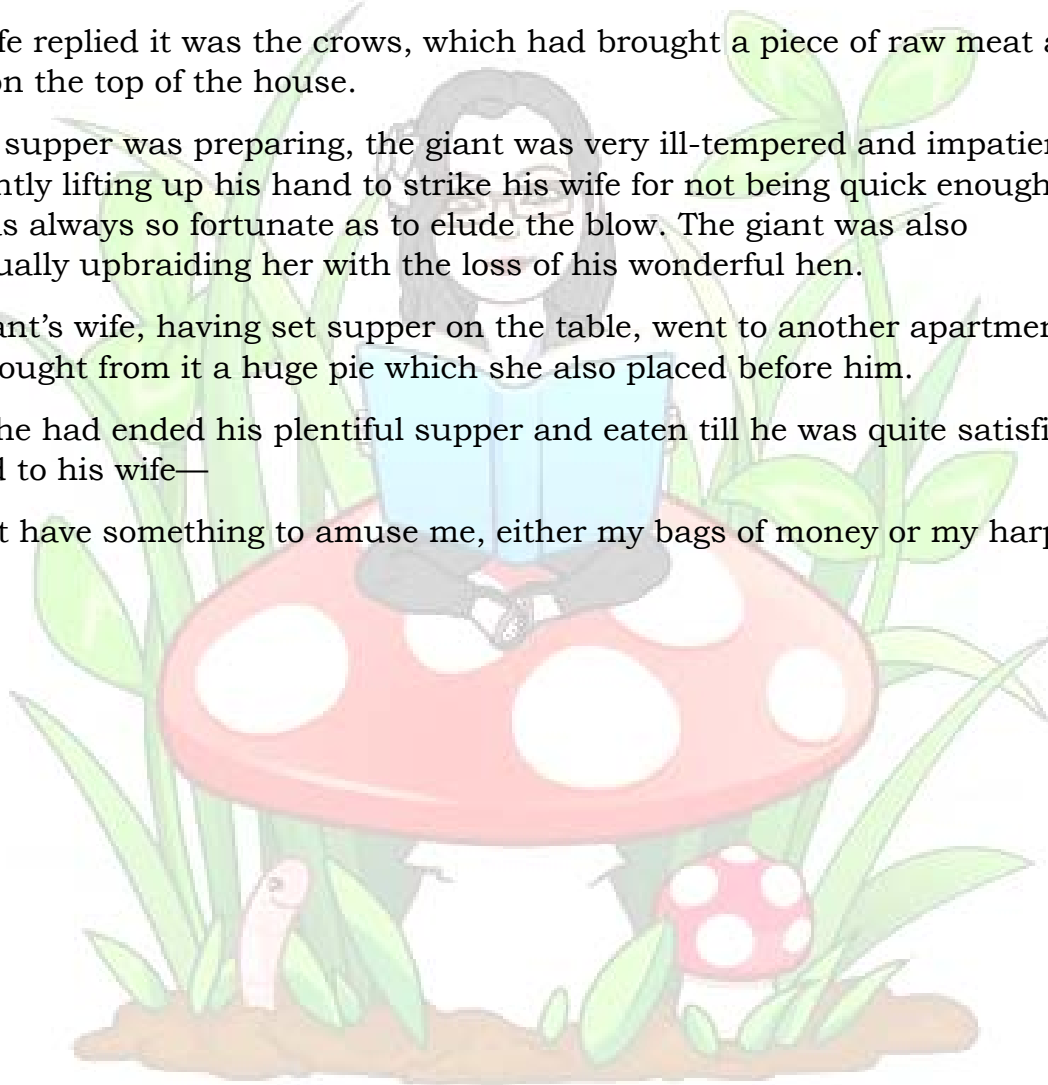
The wife replied it was the crows, which had brought a piece of raw meat and left it on the top of the house.

Whilst supper was preparing, the giant was very ill-tempered and impatient, frequently lifting up his hand to strike his wife for not being quick enough, but she was always so fortunate as to elude the blow. The giant was also continually upbraiding her with the loss of his wonderful hen.

The giant’s wife, having set supper on the table, went to another apartment and brought from it a huge pie which she also placed before him.

When he had ended his plentiful supper and eaten till he was quite satisfied, he said to his wife—

“I must have something to amuse me, either my bags of money or my harp.”



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After a good deal of ill-humour, and after having teased his wife for some time, he commanded her to bring down his bags of gold and silver. Jack, as before, peeped out of his hiding place, and presently the wife brought two bags into the room. They were of a very large size. One was filled with new guineas, and the other with new shillings. They were placed before the giant, who began reprimanding his poor wife most severely for staying so long. She replied, trembling with fear, that they were so heavy she could scarcely lift them, and concluded by saying she would never again bring them downstairs,[144] adding that she had nearly fainted owing to their weight.

This so exasperated the giant that he raised his hand to strike her, but she escaped and went to bed, leaving him to count over his treasure by way of amusement.

The giant took his bags, and after turning them over and over to see they were in the same state he had left them, began to count their contents. First the bag which contained the silver was emptied, and the contents placed upon the table. Jack viewed the glittering heaps with delight, and most heartily wished them in his own possession. The giant (little thinking he was so narrowly watched) reckoned the silver over several times, and then, having satisfied himself that all was safe, put it into the bags again, which he made very secure.

The other bag was opened next, and the guineas placed upon the table. If Jack was pleased at the sight of the silver, how much more delighted must he have felt when he saw such a heap of glittering gold? He even had the boldness to think of gaining both bags, but, suddenly recollecting himself, he began to fear that the giant would sham sleep, the better to entrap any one who might be concealed.

When the giant had counted over the gold till he was tired, he put it up, if possible more secure than he had put up the silver before, and he then fell back on his chair by the fireside and fell asleep.[145] He snored so loud that Jack compared his noise to the roaring of the sea in a high wind, when the tide is coming in. At last Jack concluded him to be asleep and therefore secure. He stole out of his hiding-place and approached the giant, in order to carry off the two bags of money. Just as he laid his hand upon one of the bags a little dog, which he had not observed before, started from under the giant's chair and barked at Jack most furiously, who now gave himself up for lost. Fear rivetted him to the spot, and instead of endeavouring to escape he stood still, though expecting his enemy to awake every instant. Contrary, however, to his expectation the giant continued in a sound sleep, and the dog grew weary of barking. Jack now began to recollect himself, and, on looking around, saw a

large piece of meat. This he threw to the dog, who instantly seized it, and took it into the lumber-closet which Jack had just left.

Finding himself delivered from a noisy and troublesome enemy, and seeing the giant did not awake, Jack boldly seized the bags, and, throwing them over his shoulders, ran out of the kitchen. He reached the street-door in safety, and found it quite daylight. On his way to the top of the beanstalk he found himself greatly incommoded with the weight of the money bags, and, really, they were so heavy he could scarcely carry them.



Jack was overjoyed when he found himself near[146] the beanstalk. He soon reached the bottom and ran to meet his mother. To his great surprise the cottage was deserted. He ran from one room to another without being able to find any one. He then hastened into the village, hoping to see some of his neighbours, who could inform him where he could find her.

An old woman at last directed him to a neighbouring house, where his mother was ill of a fever. He was greatly shocked on finding her apparently dying, and could scarcely bear his own reflections on knowing himself to be the cause of it.

On being informed of our hero's safe return, his mother, by degrees, revived, and gradually recovered. Jack presented her his two valuable bags, and they lived happy and comfortably. The cottage was rebuilt and well furnished.

For three years Jack heard no more of the beanstalk, but he could not forget it, though he feared making his mother unhappy. She would not mention the hated beanstalk, lest her doing so should remind him of taking another journey.

Notwithstanding the comforts Jack enjoyed at home, his mind continually dwelt upon the beanstalk, for the fairy's menaces in case of his disobedience were ever present to his mind and prevented him from being happy. He could think of nothing else. It was in vain he endeavoured to amuse himself. He became thoughtful, would arise[147] at the first dawn of day, and would view the beanstalk for hours together.

His mother discovered that something preyed heavily upon his mind, and endeavoured to discover the cause, but Jack knew too well what the consequence would be should he discover the cause of his melancholy to her. He did his utmost, therefore, to conquer the great desire he had for another journey up the beanstalk. Finding, however, that his inclination grew too powerful for him, he began to make secret preparations for his journey, and, on the longest day, arose as soon as it was light, ascended the beanstalk, and reached the top with some little trouble. He found the road, journey, etc., much as it was on the two former times. He arrived at the giant's mansion in the evening, and found his wife standing, as usual, at the door. Jack had disguised himself so completely that she did not appear to have the least recollection of him. However, when he pleaded hunger and poverty in order to gain admittance, he found it very difficult, indeed, to persuade her. At last he prevailed, and was concealed in the copper.

When the giant returned, he said—

"I smell fresh meat," but Jack felt composed, for the giant had said so before, and had been soon satisfied; however, the giant started up suddenly and

searched all round the room. Whilst this was going forward Jack was exceedingly terrified, and [148] ready to die with fear, wishing himself at home a thousand times, but when the giant approached the copper, and put his hand upon the lid, Jack thought his death was certain. The giant ended his search there without moving the lid, and seated himself quietly by the fireside.

The giant at last ate a hearty supper, and when he had finished, he commanded his wife to fetch down his harp. Jack peeped under the copper lid and soon saw the most beautiful harp that could be imagined. It was placed by the giant on the table, who said—

“Play,” and it instantly played of its own accord, without being touched. The music was uncommonly fine. Jack was delighted, and felt more anxious to get the harp into his possession than either of the former treasures.

The giant’s soul was not attuned to harmony, and the music soon lulled him into a sound sleep. Now, therefore, was the time to carry off the harp. As the giant appeared to be in a more profound sleep than usual, Jack, soon determined, got out of the copper and seized the harp. The harp, however, was enchanted by a fairy, and it called out loudly—

“Master, master!”

The giant awoke, stood up, and tried to pursue Jack, but he had drunk so much that he could hardly stand. Poor Jack ran as fast as he could, and, in a little time, the giant recovered sufficiently [149] to walk slowly, or rather, to reel after him. Had he been sober he must have overtaken Jack instantly, but as he then was, Jack contrived to be first at the top of the beanstalk. The giant called after him in a voice like thunder, and sometimes was very near him.

The moment Jack got down the beanstalk he called out for a hatchet, and one was brought him directly. Just at that instant the giant was beginning to descend, but Jack with his hatchet cut the beanstalk close off at the root, which made the giant fall headlong into the garden. The fall killed him, thereby releasing the world from a barbarous enemy.

Jack’s mother was delighted when she saw the beanstalk destroyed. At this instant the fairy appeared. She first addressed Jack’s mother, and explained every circumstance relating to the journeys up the beanstalk. The fairy then charged Jack to be dutiful to his mother, and to follow his father’s good example, which was the only way to be happy. She then disappeared. Jack heartily begged his mother’s pardon for all the sorrow and affliction he had caused her, promising most faithfully to be very dutiful and obedient to her for the future.



JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

By Anonymous

There was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jack, and a cow named Milky-white. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-white gave no milk and they didn't know what to do.

“What shall we do, what shall we do?” said the widow, wringing her hands.

“Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere,” said Jack.

“We've tried that before, and nobody would take you,” said his mother; “we must sell Milky-white and with the money do something, start shop, or something.”

“All right, mother,” says Jack; “it's market-day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-white, and then we'll see what we can do.”

So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he starts. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man who said to him: “Good morning, Jack.”

“Good morning to you,” said Jack, and wondered how he knew his name.

“Well, Jack, and where are you off to?” said the man.

“I'm going to market to sell our cow here.”

“Oh, you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows,” said the man; “I wonder if you know how many beans make five.”

“Two in each hand and one in your mouth,” says Jack, as sharp as a needle.

“Right you are,” said the man, “and here they are the very beans themselves,” he went on pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans. “As you are so sharp,” says he, “I don't mind doing a swop with you—your cow for these beans.”

“Walker!” says Jack; “wouldn't you like it?”

“Ah! you don't know what these beans are,” said the man; “if you plant them over-night, by morning they grow right up to the sky.”

“Really?” says Jack; “you don't say so.”

“Yes, that is so, and if it doesn't turn out to be true you can have your cow back.”

“Right,” says Jack, and hands him over Milky-white's halter and pockets the beans.

Back goes Jack home, and as he hadn't gone very far it wasn't dusk by the time he got to his door.

“What back, Jack?” said his mother; “I see you haven't got Milky-white, so you've sold her. How much did you get for her?”

“You'll never guess, mother,” says Jack.

“No, you don't say so. Good boy! Five pounds, ten, fifteen, no, it can't be twenty.”

“I told you you couldn't guess, what do you say to these beans; they're magical, plant them over-night and——”

“What!” says Jack's mother, “have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-white, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans. Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and not a bit shall you swallow this very night.”

So Jack went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to be sure, as much for his mother's sake, as for the loss of his supper.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke up, the room looked so funny. The sun was shining into part of it, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady. So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window. And what do you think he saw? why, the beans his mother had thrown out of the window into the garden, had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up till it reached the sky. So the man spoke truth after all.

The beanstalk grew up quite close past Jack's window, so all he had to do was to open it and give a jump on to the beanstalk which was made like a big plaited ladder. So Jack climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he reached the sky. And when he got there he found a long broad road going as straight as a dart. So he walked along and he walked along and he walked along till he came to a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there was a great big tall woman.

“Good morning, mum,” says Jack, quite polite-like. “Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast.” For he hadn't had anything to eat, you know, the night before and was as hungry as a hunter.

“It's breakfast you want, is it?” says the great big tall woman, “it's breakfast you'll be if you don't move off from here. My man is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast. You'd better be moving on or he'll soon be coming.”

“Oh! please mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum,” says Jack. “I may as well be broiled, as die of hunger.”

Well, the ogre's wife wasn't such a bad sort, after all. So she took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a junk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn't half finished these when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

“Goodness gracious me! It's my old man,” said the ogre's wife, “what on earth shall I do? Here, come quick and jump in here.” And she bundled Jack into the oven just as the ogre came in.

He was a big one, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels, and he unhooked them and threw them down on the table and said: “Here, wife, broil me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah what's this I smell?

*Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,
Be he alive, or be he dead
I'll have his bones to grind my bread.”*

“Nonsense, dear,” said his wife, “you're dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday's dinner. Here, go you and have a wash and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast'll be ready for you.”

So the ogre went off, and Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run off when the woman told him not. “Wait till he's asleep,” says she; “he always has a snooze after breakfast.”

Well, the ogre had his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out of it a couple of bags of gold and sits down counting them till at last his head began to nod and he began to snore till the whole house shook again.

Then Jack crept out on tiptoe from his oven, and as he was passing the ogre he took one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he pelters till he came to the beanstalk, and then he threw down the bag of gold which of course fell in to his mother's garden, and then he climbed down and climbed down till at last he got home and told his mother and showed her the gold and said: “Well, mother, wasn't I right about the beans. They are really magical, you see.”

So they lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last they came to the end of that so Jack made up his mind to try his luck once more up at the top of the beanstalk. So

one fine morning he got up early, and got on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till at last he got on the road again and came to the great big tall house he had been to before. There, sure enough, was the great big tall woman a-standing on the door-step.

“Good morning, mum,” says Jack, as bold as brass, “could you be so good as to give me something to eat?”

“Go away, my boy,” said the big, tall woman, “or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren't you the youngster who came here once before? Do you know, that very day, my man missed one of his bags of gold.”

“That's strange, mum,” says Jack, “I dare say I could tell you something about that but I'm so hungry I can't speak till I've had something to eat.”

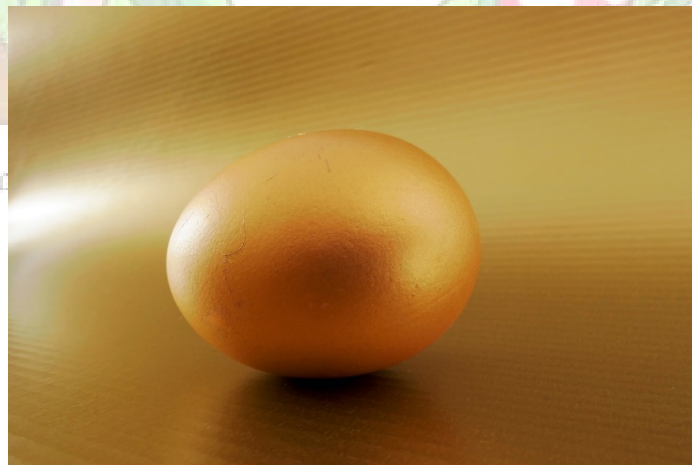
Well the big tall woman was that curious that she took him in and gave him something to eat. But he had scarcely begun munching it as slowly as he could when thump! thump! thump! they heard the giant's footstep, and his wife hid Jack away in the oven.

All happened as it did before. In came the ogre as he did before, said: “Fee-fi-fo-fum,” and had his breakfast off three broiled oxen. Then he said: “Wife, bring me the hen that lays the golden eggs.” So she brought it, and the ogre said: “Lay,” and it laid an egg all of gold. And then the ogre began to nod his head, and to snore till the house shook.

Then Jack crept out of the oven on tiptoe and caught hold of the golden hen, and was off before you could say “Jack Robinson.” But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the ogre, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling: “Wife, wife, what have you done with my golden hen?”

And the wife said: “Why, my dear?”

But that was all Jack heard, for he rushed off to the beanstalk and climbed down like a house on fire. And when he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen and said “Lay,” to it; and it laid a golden egg every time he said “Lay.”



Well, Jack was not content, and it wasn't very long before he determined to have another try at his luck up there at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning, he got up early, and went on to the beanstalk, and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed and he climbed till he got to the top. But this time he knew better than to go straight to the ogre's house. And when he got near it he waited behind a bush till he saw the ogre's wife come out with a pail to get some water, and then he crept into the house and got into the copper. He hadn't been there long when he heard thump! thump! thump! as before, and in come the ogre and his wife.

“Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman,” cried out the ogre; “I smell him, wife, I smell him.”

“Do you, my dearie?” says the ogre's wife. “Then if it's that little rogue that stole your gold and the hen that laid the golden eggs he's sure to have got into the oven.” And they both rushed to the oven. But Jack wasn't there, luckily, and the ogre's wife said: “There you are again with your fee-fi-fo-fum. Why of course it's the laddie you caught last night that I've broiled for your breakfast. How forgetful I am, and how careless you are not to tell the difference between a live un and a dead un.”

So the ogre sat down to the breakfast and ate it, but every now and then he would mutter: “Well, I could have sworn——” and he'd get up and search the larder and the cupboards, and everything, only luckily he didn't think of the copper.

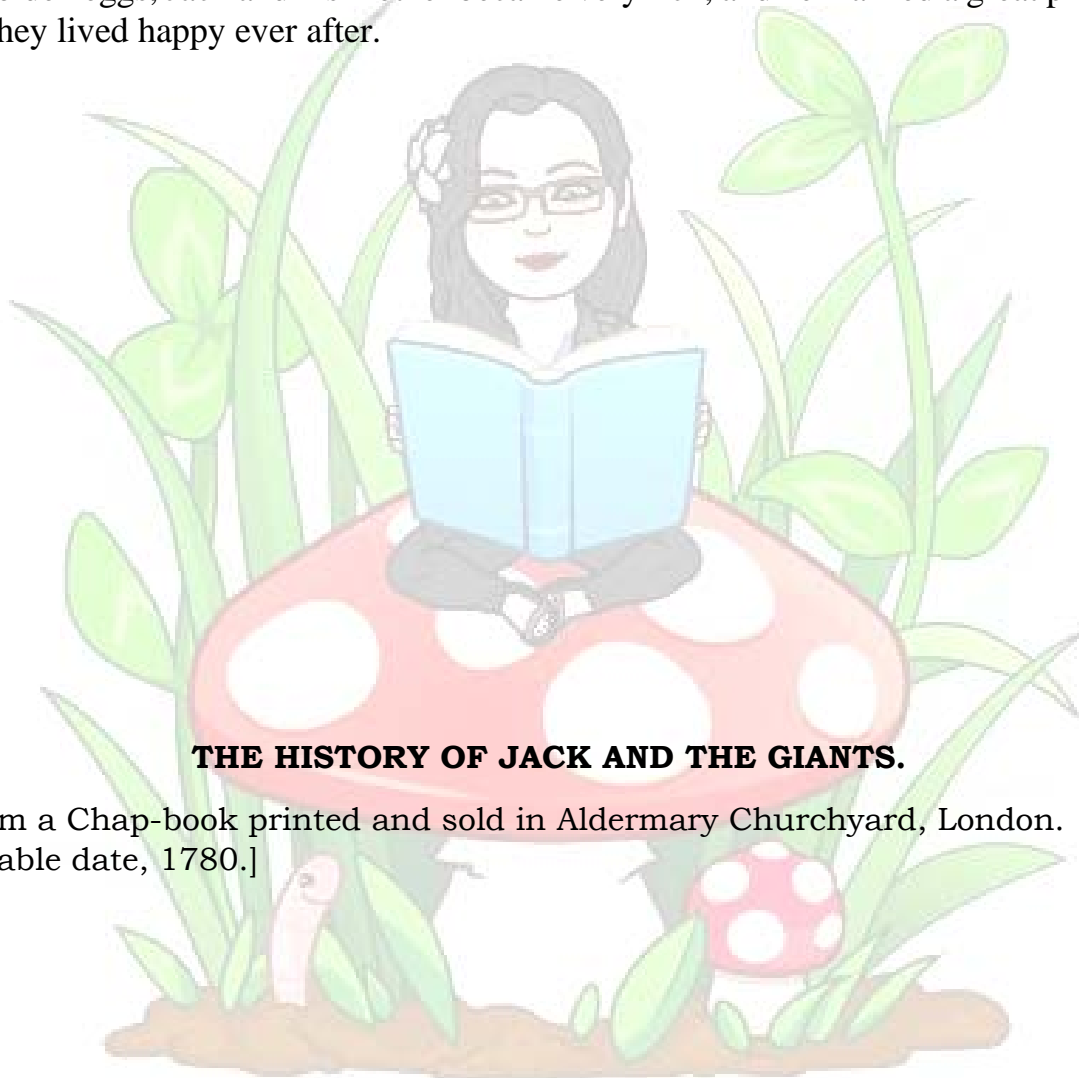
After breakfast was over, the ogre called out: “Wife, wife, bring me my golden harp.” So she brought it and put it on the table before him. Then he said: “Sing!” and the golden harp sang most beautifully. And it went on singing till the ogre fell asleep, and commenced to snore like thunder.

Then Jack lifted up the copper-lid very quietly and got down like a mouse and crept on hands and knees till he got to the table when he got up and caught hold of the golden harp and dashed with it towards the door. But the harp called out quite loud: “Master! Master!” and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp.

Jack ran as fast as he could, and the ogre came rushing after, and would soon have caught him only Jack had a start and dodged him a bit and knew where he was going. When he got to the beanstalk the ogre was not more than twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear like, and when he got up to the end of the road he saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life. Well, the ogre didn't like trusting himself to such a ladder, and he stood and waited, so Jack got another start. But just then the harp cried out: “Master! master!” and the ogre swung himself down on to the beanstalk which shook with his weight. Down climbs Jack, and after him climbed the ogre. By this time Jack had climbed down and climbed down and climbed down till he was very nearly home. So he called out: “Mother! mother! bring me an axe, bring me an axe.” And his mother came rushing out with the axe in her hand, but when she came to the beanstalk she stood stock still with fright for there she saw the ogre just coming down below the clouds.

But Jack jumped down and got hold of the axe and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it half in two. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver so he stopped to see what was the matter. Then Jack gave another chop with the axe, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp, and what with showing that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich, and he married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after.



THE HISTORY OF JACK AND THE GIANTS.

[From a Chap-book printed and sold in Aldermay Churchyard, London.
Probable date, 1780.]

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I.

In the reign of King Arthur, near to the Land's End of England, in the County of Cornwall, lived a wealthy farmer, who had a son named Jack. He was brisk and of a ready wit, so that whatever he could not perform by force and strength he completed by wit and policy. Never was any person heard of that could worst him. Nay, the very learned many times he has baffled by his cunning and sharp inventions.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a large and monstrous giant of eighteen feet high, and about three yards in circumference, of a fierce and grim countenance, the terror of the neighbouring towns and villages.

His habitation was in a cave in the midst of the Mount. Never would he suffer any living creature to keep near him. His feeding was on other men's[58] cattle, which often became his prey, for whenever he wanted food, he would wade over to the mainland, where he would well furnish himself with whatever he could find, for the people at his approach would all forsake their habitations. Then would he seize upon their cows and oxen, of which he would think nothing to carry over upon his back half a dozen at one time; and as for their sheep and boys, 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 very much impoverished by him.

Jack having undertaken to destroy this voracious monster, he furnished himself with a horn, a shovel, and a pickaxe, and over to the mount he went in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, where he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and in width nearly the same, and covering it over with sticks and straw, and then strewing a little mould over it, it appeared like plain ground. Then, putting his horn to his mouth, he blew tan-tivy, tan-tivy, 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.”

These words were no sooner spoke, but he tumbled headlong into the pit, and the heavy fall made the foundation of the Mount to shake.

[59]

“O Mr. Giant, where are you now? Oh, faith, you are gotten into Lob's Pound, where I will surely plague you for your threatening words. What do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast? Will no other diet serve you but poor Jack?”

Having thus spoken and made merry with him a while, he struck him such a blow on the crown with his pole-axe that he tumbled down, and with a groan expired. This done, Jack threw the dirt in upon him and so buried him. Then, searching the cave, he found much treasure.

Now when the magistrates who employed Jack heard that the job was over, they sent for him, declaring that he should be henceforth called Jack the Giant Killer, and in honour thereof presented him with a sword and an embroidered 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 was soon spread over the western parts, so that another giant, called Old Blunderbore, hearing of it, vowed to be revenged on Jack, if it ever was his fortune to light on him. The giant kept an enchanted castle situated in the midst of a lonesome wood.

About four months after as Jack was walking by the borders of this wood, on his journey towards Wales, he grew weary, and therefore sat^[60] himself down by the side of a pleasant fountain, when a deep sleep suddenly seized him. At this time the giant, coming there for water, found him, and by the lines upon his belt immediately knew him to be Jack, who had killed his brother giant. So, without any words, he took him upon his shoulder to carry him to his

enchanted castle. As he passed through a thicket, the jostling of the boughs awoke Jack, who, finding himself in the clutches of the giant was very much surprised, though it was but the beginning of his terrors, for, entering the walls of the castle, he found the floor strewn and the walls covered with the skulls and bones of dead men, when the giant told him his bones should enlarge the number of what he saw. He also told him that the next day he would eat him with pepper and vinegar, and he did not question but that he would find him a curious breakfast. This said, he locks up poor Jack in an upper room, leaving him there while he went out to fetch another giant who lived in the same wood, that he also might partake of the pleasure they should have in the destruction of honest Jack. While he was gone dreadful shrieks and cries affrighted Jack, especially a voice which continually cried—

“Do what you can to get away,
Or you’ll become the giant’s prey;
He’s gone to fetch his brother who
Will likewise kill and torture you.”

[61]

This dreadful noise so affrighted poor Jack, that he was ready to run distracted. Then, going to a window he opened the casement, and beheld afar off the two giants coming.

“So now,” quoth Jack to himself, “my death or deliverance is at hand.”

There were two strong cords in the room by him, at the end of which he made a noose, and as the giants were unlocking the iron gates, he threw the ropes over the giants’ heads, and then threw the other end across a beam, when he pulled with all his might till he had throttled them. Then, fastening the ropes to a beam, he returned to the window, where he beheld the two giants black in the face, and so sliding down the ropes, he came upon the heads of the helpless giants, who could not defend themselves, and, drawing his own sword, he slew them both, and so delivered himself from their intended cruelty. Then, taking the bunch of keys, he entered the castle, where, upon strict search, he found three ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, and almost starved to death.

“Sweet ladies,” said Jack, “I have destroyed the monster and his brutish brother, by which means I have obtained your liberties.”

This said, he presented them with the keys of the castle, and proceeded on his journey to Wales.

Jack having got but little money, thought it prudent to make the best of his way by travelling[62] hard, and at length, losing his road, he was benighted, and could not get a place of entertainment, till, coming to a valley between two

hills, he found a large house in a lonesome place, and by reason of his present necessity he took courage to knock at the gate. To his amazement there came forth a monstrous giant, having two heads, yet he did not seem so fiery as the other two, for he was a Welsh giant, and all he did was by private and secret malice, under the false show of friendship. Jack, telling his condition, he bid him welcome, showing him into a room with a bed, where he might take his night's repose. Upon this Jack undressed himself, but as the giant was walking to another apartment Jack heard him mutter these words to himself—

“Tho' here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light,
My club shall dash your brains out quite.”

“Say you so?” says Jack. “Is this one of your Welsh tricks? I hope to be as cunning as you.”

Then, getting out of bed, and feeling about the room in the dark, he found a thick billet of wood, and laid it in the bed in his stead, then he hid himself in a dark corner of the room. In the dead time of the night came the giant with his club, and he struck several blows on the bed where Jack had artfully laid the billet. Then the giant returned back to his own room, supposing he had broken all[63] his bones. Early in the morning Jack came to thank him for his lodging.

“Oh,” said the giant, “how have you rested? Did you see anything in the night?”

“No,” said Jack, “but a rat gave me three or four slaps with his tail.”

Soon after the giant went to breakfast on a great bowl of hasty pudding, giving Jack but a small quantity. Jack, being loath to let him know he could not eat with him, got a leather bag, and, putting it artfully under his coat, put the pudding into it. Then he told the giant he would show him a trick, and taking up a knife he ripped open the bag and out fell the pudding. The giant thought he had cut open his stomach and taken the pudding out.

“Odds splutters,” says he, “hur can do that hursel,” and, taking the knife up, he cut himself so badly that he fell down and died.

Thus Jack outwitted the Welsh giant and proceeded on his journey.

King Arthur's only son desired his father to furnish him with a certain sum of money, that he might go and seek his fortune in the principality of Wales, where a beautiful lady lived, whom he had heard was possessed with seven evil spirits.

The king, his father, counselled him against it, yet he could not be persuaded, so the favour was granted, which was one horse loaded with money, and another to ride on. Thus he went forth without[64] any attendants, and after

several days' travel he came to a large market-town in Wales, where he beheld a vast crowd of people gathered together. The king's son demanded the reason of it, and was told that they had arrested a corpse for many large sums of money, which the deceased owed before he died. The king's son replied—

“It is a pity that creditors should be so cruel. Go, bury the dead, and let the creditors come to my lodgings, and their debts shall be discharged.”

Accordingly they came, and in such great numbers that before night he had almost left himself penniless. Now Jack the Giant Killer being there, and seeing the generosity of the king's son, desired to be his servant. It being agreed on, the next morning they set forward. As they were riding out of the town's end, an old woman cried out—

“He has owed me twopence seven years, pray, sir, pay me as well as the rest.”

The king's son put his hand in his pocket and gave it her, it being the last money he had, then, turning to Jack, he said—

“Take no thought nor heed. Let me alone, and I warrant you we will never want.”

Now Jack had a small spell in his pocket, the which served for a refreshment, after which they had but one penny left between them. They spent the forenoon in travel and familiar discourse, until the sun grew low, when the king's son said—

[65]

“Jack, since we have got no money where can we lodge to-night?”

Jack replied—

“Master, we will do well enough, for I have an uncle who lives within two miles of this place. He is a huge and monstrous giant, having three heads. He will beat five hundred men in armour, and make them fly before him.”

“Alas!” said the king's son, “what shall we do there? He will eat us up at a mouthful—nay, we are scarce sufficient to fill one hollow tooth.”

“It is no matter for that,” says Jack. “I myself will go before and prepare the way for you. Tarry here, and wait my return.”

He waited, and Jack rode full speed. Coming to the castle gate, he immediately began to knock with such force that all the neighbouring hills resounded. The giant, roaring with a voice like thunder, called—

“Who is there?”

“None, but your poor cousin Jack.”

“And what news,” said he, “with my cousin Jack?”

He replied—

“Dear uncle, heavy news.”

“God wot! Prithee! what heavy news can come to me? I am a giant with three heads, and besides, thou knowest, I fight five hundred men in armour, and make them all fly like chaff before the wind.”

“Oh,” said Jack, “but here is a king’s son coming[66] with a thousand men in armour to kill you, and to destroy all you have.”

“O my cousin Jack, this is heavy news indeed, but I have a large vault underground where I will run and hide myself, and you shall lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys till the king’s son is gone.”

Jack, having now secured the giant, returned and fetched his master, and both made merry with the best dainties the house afforded. In the morning Jack furnished his master with fresh supplies of gold and silver, and having set him three miles on the road out of the giant’s smell, he returned and let his uncle out of the hole, who asked Jack what he should give him for his care of him, seeing his castle was demolished.

“Why,” said Jack, “I desire nothing but your old rusty sword, the coat in the closet, and the cap and the shoes at your bed’s head.”

“Ay,” said the giant, “thou shalt have them, and be sure keep you them, for my sake. They are things of excellent use. The coat will keep you invisible, the cap will furnish you with knowledge, the sword cuts asunder whatever you strike, and the shoes are of extraordinary swiftness. They may be serviceable to you, so take them with all my heart.”

Jack took them, and immediately followed his master. Having overtaken him, they soon arrived at the lady’s dwelling, who, finding the king’s son to[67] be a suitor, prepared a banquet for him, which being ended, she wiped her mouth with a handkerchief, saying—“You must show me this to-morrow morning, or lose your head,” and then she put it in her bosom.

The king’s son went to bed right sorrowful, but Jack’s cap of knowledge instructed him how to obtain the handkerchief. In the midst of the night the lady called upon her familiar to carry her to Lucifer. Jack whipped on his coat of darkness, with his shoes of swiftness, and was there before her, but could not be seen by reason of his coat, which rendered him perfectly invisible to Lucifer himself. When the lady came she gave him the handkerchief, from

whom Jack took it, and brought it to his master, who, showing it the next morning to the lady, saved his life. This much surprised the lady, but he had yet a harder trial to undergo. The next night the lady salutes the king's son, telling him he must show her the next day the lips she kissed last or lose his head.

"So I will," replied he, "if you kiss none but mine."

"It is neither here nor there for that," says she. "If you do not, death is your portion."

At midnight she went again and chid Lucifer for letting the handkerchief go.

"But now," said she, "I shall be too hard for the king's son, for I will kiss thee, and he is to show me^[68] the lips I kissed last, and he can never show me thy lips."

Jack, standing up with his sword of sharpness, cut off the evil spirit's head, and brought it under his invisible coat to his master, who laid it at the end of his bolster, and in the morning, when the lady came up, he pulled it out and showed her the lips which she kissed last. Thus, she having been answered twice, the enchantment broke, and the evil spirit left her, to their mutual joy and satisfaction. Then she appeared her former self, both beautiful and virtuous. They were married the next morning, and soon after returned with joy to the court of King Arthur, where Jack, for his good services, was made one of the knights of the Round Table.

II.

[From a Chap-book, printed and sold at Newcastle, by J. White, 1711.]

Jack, having been successful in all his undertakings, and resolved not to be idle for the future, but to perform what service he could for the honour of his king and country, humbly requested of the king, his royal master, to fit him with a horse and money, to travel in search of strange and new adventures. "For," said he, "there are many giants yet living in the remote parts of the kingdom, and in the^[69] dominions of Wales, to the unspeakable damage of your majesty's liege subjects, wherefore, may it please your majesty to give me encouragement, and I doubt not but in a short time to cut them all off, root and branch, and so rid the realm of those cruel giants and devouring monsters in nature."

Now, when the king had heard these noble propositions, and had duly considered the mischievous practices of those bloodthirsty giants, he immediately granted what honest Jack requested. And on the first day of March, being thoroughly furnished with all necessaries for his progress, he

took his leave, not only of King Arthur, but likewise of all the trusty and hardy knights belonging to the Round Table, who, after much salutation and friendly greeting, parted, the king and nobles to their courtly palaces, and Jack the Giant Killer to the eager pursuit of Fortune's favours, taking with him the cap of knowledge, sword of sharpness, shoes of swiftness, and likewise the invisible coat, the latter to perfect and complete the dangerous enterprises that lay before him.

He travelled over vast hills and wonderful mountains till, at the end of three days, he came to a large and spacious wood, through which he must needs pass, where, on a sudden, to his great amazement, he heard dreadful shrieks and cries. Casting his eyes around to observe what it might be, he beheld with wonder a giant rushing along with a [70] worthy knight and his fair lady, whom he held by the hair of their heads in his hands, with as much ease as if they had been but a pair of gloves, the sight of which melted honest Jack into tears of pity and compassion. Alighting off his horse, which he left tied to an oak-tree, and then putting on his invisible coat, under which he carried his sword of sharpness, he came up to the giant, and, though he made several passes at him, yet, nevertheless, he could not reach the trunk of his body by reason of his height, though he wounded his thighs in several places. At length, giving him a swinging stroke, he cut off both his legs, just below the knees, so that the trunk of his body made not only the ground to shake, but likewise the trees to tremble with the force of its fall, at which, by mere fortune, the knight and his lady escaped his rage. Then had Jack time to talk with him, and, setting his foot upon his neck, he said—

“Thou savage and barbarous wretch, I am come to execute upon you the just reward of your villainy,” and with that, running him through and through, the monster sent forth a hideous groan, and yielded up his life into the hands of the valiant conqueror, Jack the Giant Killer, while the noble knight and virtuous lady were both joyful spectators of his sudden downfall and their deliverance.

This being done, the courteous knight and his fair lady not only returned Jack hearty thanks for [71] their deliverance, but also invited him home, there to refresh himself after the dreadful encounter, as likewise to receive some ample reward, by way of gratuity, for his good service.

“No,” quoth Jack; “I cannot be at ease till I find out the den which was this monster's habitation.”

The knight, hearing this, waxed right sorrowful and replied—

“Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second risk, for note, this monster lived in a den under yon mountain with a brother of his, more fierce and fiery than

himself. Therefore, if you should go thither and perish in that attempt it would be the heartbreaking of both me and my lady. Therefore let me persuade you to go with us, and desist from any further pursuit.”

“Nay,” quoth Jack, “if there be another—nay, were there twenty, I would shed the last drop of blood in my body before one of them should escape my fury. When I have finished this task I will come and pay my respects to you.”

So, having taken the directions to their habitation, he mounted his horse, leaving them to return home, while he went in pursuit of the deceased giant’s brother. He had not ridden past a mile and a half before he came in sight of the cave’s mouth, near to the entrance of which he beheld the other giant sitting upon a huge block of timber with a^[72] knotted iron club lying by his side, waiting, as Jack supposed, for his brother’s return. His goggle eyes appeared like terrible flames of fire. His countenance was grim and ugly, his cheeks being like a couple of large fat flitches of bacon. Moreover, the bristles of his beard seemed to resemble rods of iron wire. His locks hung down upon his broad shoulders, like curled snakes or hissing adders.

Jack alighted from his horse and put him into a thicket, then, with his coat of darkness, he came somewhat nearer to behold this figure, and said softly—

“Oh! are you there? It will be not long e’er I shall take you by the beard.”

The giant all this time could not see him by reason of his invisible coat. So, coming up close to him, valiant Jack, fetching a blow at his head with his sword of sharpness, and missing something of his arm, cut off the giant’s nose. The pain was terrible, and so he put up his hands to feel for his nose, and when he could not find it, he raved and roared louder than claps of thunder. Though he turned up his large eyes, he could not see from whence the blow came which had done him that great disaster, yet, nevertheless, he took up his iron-knotted club, and began to lay about him like one that was stark staring mad.

“Nay,” quoth Jack, “if you are for that sport, then I will despatch you quickly, for I fear an accidental blow should fall on me.”

[73]

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Then, as the giant rose from his block, Jack makes no more to do but runs the sword up to the hilt in his body, where he left it sticking for a while, and stood himself laughing, with his hands akimbo, to see the giant caper and dance, crying out.

The giant continued raving for an hour or more, and at length fell down dead, whose dreadful fall had like to have crushed poor Jack had he not been nimble to avoid the same.

This being done, Jack cut off both the giants' heads and sent them to King Arthur by a wagoner whom he hired for the purpose, together with an account of his prosperous success in all his undertakings.

Jack, having thus despatched these monsters, resolved with himself to enter the cave in search of these giants' treasure. He passed along through many turnings and windings, which led him at length to a room paved with free-stone, at the upper end of which was a boiling cauldron. On the right hand stood a large table where, as he supposed, the giants used to dine. He came to an iron gate where was a window secured with bars of iron, through which he looked, and there beheld a vast many miserable captives, who, seeing Jack at a distance, cried out with a loud voice—

“Alas! young man, art thou come to be one amongst us in this miserable den?”

“Ay,” quoth Jack, “I hope I shall not tarry[74] long here; but pray tell me what is the meaning of your captivity?”

“Why,” said one young man, “I'll tell you. We are persons that have been taken by the giants that keep this cave, and here we are kept till such time as they have occasion for a particular feast, and then the fattest amongst us is slaughtered and prepared for their devouring jaws. It is not long since they took three for the same purpose.”

“Say you so,” quoth Jack; “well, I have given them, both such a dinner that it will be long enough e'er they'll have occasion for any more.”

The miserable captives were amazed at his words.

“You may believe me,” quoth Jack, “for I have slain them with the point of my sword, and as for their monstrous heads, I sent them in a wagon to the court of King Arthur as trophies of my unparalleled victory.”

For a testimony of the truth he had said, he unlocked the iron gate, setting the miserable captives at liberty, who all rejoiced like condemned malefactors at the sight of a reprieve. Then, leading them all together to the aforesaid room, he placed them round the table, and set before them two quarters of beef, as also bread and wine, so that he feasted them very plentifully. Supper being ended, they searched the giants' coffers, where, finding a vast store of gold and silver, Jack equally divided it among them. They all returned him[75] hearty thanks for their treasure and miraculous deliverance. That night they went to their rest, and in the morning they arose and departed—the captives to their

respective towns and places of abode, and Jack to the house of the knight whom he had formerly delivered from the hand of the giant.

It was about sun-rising when Jack mounted his horse to proceed on his journey, and by the help of his directions he came to the knight's house some time before noon, where he was received with all demonstrations of joy imaginable by the knight and his lady, who, in honourable respect to Jack, prepared a feast, which lasted for many days, inviting all the gentry in the adjacent parts, to whom the worthy knight was pleased to relate the manner of his former danger and the happy deliverance by the undaunted courage of Jack the Giant Killer. By way of gratitude he presented Jack with a ring of gold, on which was engraved, by curious art, the picture of the giant dragging a distressed knight and his fair lady by the hair of the head, with this motto—

“We are in sad distress, you see,
Under a giant's fierce command;
But gained our lives and liberty
By valiant Jack's victorious hand.”

Now, among the vast assembly there present were five aged gentlemen who were fathers to some of those miserable captives which Jack had lately set at liberty, who, understanding that he was the person that performed those great wonders, immediately paid their venerable respects. After this their mirth increased, and the smiling bowls went freely round to the prosperous success of the victorious conqueror, but, in the midst of all this mirth, a dark cloud appeared which daunted all the hearts of the honourable assembly.

Thus it was. A messenger brought the dismal tidings of the approach of one Thunderdel, a huge giant with two heads, who, having heard of the death of his kinsmen, the above-named giants, was come from the northern dales in search of Jack to be revenged of him for their most miserable downfall. He was now within a mile of the knight's seat, the country people flying before him from their houses and habitations, like chaff before the wind. When they had related this, Jack, not a whit daunted, said—

“Let him come. I am prepared with a tool to pick his teeth. And you, gentlemen and ladies, walk but forth into the garden, and you shall be the joyful spectators of this monstrous giant's death and destruction.”

To which they consented, every one wishing him good fortune in that great and dangerous enterprise.

The situation of this knight's house take as follows: It was placed in the midst of a small island, encompassed round with a vast moat, thirty feet deep and twenty feet wide, over which lay a drawbridge. Jack employed two men to cut this last on both sides, almost to the middle, and then, dressing himself in his

coat of darkness, likewise putting on his shoes of swiftness, he marches forth against the giant, with his sword of sharpness ready drawn. When he came up to him, yet the giant could not see Jack, by reason of his invisible coat which he had on. Yet, nevertheless, he was sensible of some approaching danger, which made him cry out in these following words—

“Fe, fi, fo, fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman;

Be he alive or be he dead

I’ll grind his bones to make me bread.”

“Sayest thou so?” quoth Jack, “then thou art a monstrous miller indeed. But what if I serve thee as I did the two giants of late? On my conscience, I should spoil your practice for the future.”

At which time the giant spoke, in a voice as loud as thunder—

“Art thou that villain which destroyed my kinsmen? Then will I tear thee with my teeth, and, what is more, I will grind thy bones to powder.”

“You will catch me first, sir,” quoth Jack, and with that he threw off his coat of darkness that the giant might see him clearly, and then ran from him, as if through fear. The giant, with foaming mouth^[78] and glaring eyes, followed after, like a walking castle, making the foundation of the earth, as it were, to shake at every step. Jack led him a dance three or four times round the moat belonging to the knight’s house, that the gentlemen and ladies might take a full view of this huge monster of nature, who followed Jack with all his might, but could not overtake him by reason of his shoes of swiftness, which carried him faster than the giant could follow. At last Jack, to finish the work, took over the bridge, the giant with full speed pursuing after him, with his iron club upon his shoulder, but, coming to the middle of the drawbridge, what with the weight of his body and the most dreadful steps that he took, it broke down, and he tumbled full into the water, where he rolled and wallowed like a whale. Jack, standing at the side of the moat, laughed at the giant and said—

“You told me you would grind my bones to powder. Here you have water enough. Pray, where is your mill?”

The giant fretted and foamed to hear him scoff at that rate, and though he plunged from place to place in the moat, yet he could not get out to be avenged on his adversary. Jack at length got a cast rope and cast it over the giant’s two heads with a slip-knot, and, by the help of a train of horses, dragged him out again, with which the giant was near strangled, and before Jack would let him loose^[79] he cut off both his heads with his sword of sharpness, in the full view of all the worthy assembly of knights, gentlemen, and ladies, who gave a joyful shout when they saw the giant fairly despatched. Then, before he would either

eat or drink, Jack sent the heads also, after the others, to the court of King Arthur, which being done, he, with the knights and ladies, returned to their mirth and pastime, which lasted for many days.

After some time spent in triumphant mirth and pastime, Jack grew weary of riotous living, wherefore, taking leave of the noble knights and ladies, he set forward in search of new adventures. Through many woods and groves he passed, meeting with nothing remarkable, till at length, coming near the foot of a high mountain, late at night, he knocked at the door of a lonesome house, at which time an ancient man, with a head as white as snow, arose and let him in.

“Father,” said Jack, “have you any entertainment for a benighted traveller that has lost his way?”

“Yes,” said the old man, “if you will accept of such accommodation as my poor cottage will afford, thou shalt be right welcome.”

Jack returned him many thanks for his great civility, wherefore down they sat together, and the old man began to discourse him as follows—

“Son,” said he, “I am sensible thou art the great[80] conqueror of giants, and it is in thy power to free this part of the country from an intolerable burden which we groan under. For, behold! my son, on the top of this high mountain there is an enchanted castle kept by a huge monstrous giant named Galligantus, who, by the help of an old conjuror, betrays many knights and ladies into this strong castle, where, by magic art, they are transformed into sundry shapes and forms. But, above all, I lament the fate of a duke’s daughter, whom they snatched from her father’s garden by magic art, carrying her through the air in a mourning chariot drawn, as it were, by two fiery dragons, and, being secured within the walls of the castle, she was immediately transformed into the real shape of a white hind, where she miserably moans her misfortune. Though many worthy knights have endeavoured to break the enchantment and work her deliverance, yet none of them could accomplish this great work, by reason of two dreadful griffins who were fixed by magic art at the entrance of the castle gate, which destroy any as soon as they see them. You, my son, being furnished with an invisible coat, may pass by them undiscovered, and on the brazen gates of the castle you will find engraved in large characters by what means the enchantment may be broken.”

The old man having ended his discourse, Jack gave him his hand, with a faithful promise that in[81] the morning he would venture his life to break the enchantment and free the lady, together with the rest that were miserable partners in her calamity.

Having refreshed themselves with a small morsel of meat, they laid them down to rest, and in the morning Jack arose and put on his invisible coat, cap of knowledge, and shoes of swiftness, and so prepares himself for the dangerous enterprises.

Now, when he had ascended to the top of the mountain, he soon discovered the two fiery griffins. He passed on between them without fear, for they could not see him by reason of his invisible coat. Now, when he was got beyond them, he cast his eyes around him, where he found upon the gates a golden trumpet, hung in a chain of fine silver, under which these lines were engraved—

“Whosoever shall this trumpet blow
Shall soon the giant overthrow,
And break the black enchantment straight,
So all shall be in happy state.”

Jack had no sooner read this inscription but he blew the trumpet, at which time the vast foundation of the castle tumbled, and the giant, together with the conjuror, was in horrid confusion, biting their thumbs and tearing their hair, knowing their wicked reign was at an end. At that time Jack, standing at the giant's elbow, as he was stooping to take up his club, at one blow, with his sword of [82] sharpness, cut off his head. The conjuror, seeing this, immediately mounted into the air and was carried away in a whirlwind. Thus was the whole enchantment broken, and every knight and lady, that had been for a long time transformed into birds and beasts, returned to their proper shapes and likeness again. As for the castle, though it seemed at first to be of vast strength and bigness, it vanished in a cloud of smoke, whereupon an universal joy appeared among the released knights and ladies. This being done, the head of Galligantus was likewise, according to the accustomed manner, conveyed to the court of King Arthur, as a present made to his majesty. The very next day, after having refreshed the knights and ladies at the old man's habitation (who lived at the foot of the mountain), Jack set forward for the court of King Arthur, with those knights and ladies he had so honourably delivered.

Coming to his majesty, and having related all the passages of his fierce encounters, his fame rang through the whole court, and, as a reward for his good services, the king prevailed with the aforesaid duke to bestow his daughter in marriage to honest Jack, protesting that there was no man so worthy of her as he, to all which the duke very honourably consented. So married they were, and not only the court, but likewise the kingdom were filled with joy and triumph at the wedding. After which the king, [83] as a reward for all his good services done for the nation, bestowed upon him a noble habitation with a plentiful estate thereto belonging, where he and his lady lived the residue of their days in great joy and happiness.



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