

JACK, THE GIANT KILLER.



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the reign of the famous King Arthur, there lived, in the county of
all, a farmer, who had an only son, named Jack, who was very
and persevering.



At that period there also lived on St. Michael's Mount, a huge giant, named Cormoran. He was twenty feet high; and his fierce and savage looks struck terror into all who beheld him. He dwelt in a gloomy cavern, and used to wade over to the main land to steal cattle.

Jack thought he could conquer this giant; so he took a horn, a pickaxe, a shovel, and a lantern, and swam over to the mount. There he set to work at once; and before morning he had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and almost as many broad. He covered the top of it over with sticks and straw, and strewed some of the earth over them, to make it look like the solid ground. He then blew such a loud tantivy with

his horn, that the giant awoke, and came running towards Jack, roaring like thunder. "You saucy villain," cried he, "you shall pay dearly for breaking my rest. I will broil you for my breakfast." He had scarcely uttered these words, when he tumbled headlong into the pit.

"Ho, ho! Mister Giant!" said Jack, "have you found your way so soon to the bottom? How is your appetite now? Will nothing serve you for breakfast, this cold morning, but poor Jack?"

The giant struggled hard to get out, but Jack struck him such heavy blows on the forehead with his pick-axe, that he killed him at once. Jack then made haste back to rejoice his friends with the good news of the giant's death.

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 presented him with a sword and belt, on which was inscribed, in letters of gold, his name and the valiant action he had performed.

Jack's exploits were very soon spread over the western parts of England; and another giant, called Blunderbore, vowed revenge on Jack. This giant lived in a strong castle in a lonely wood. About four months after the death of Cormoran, as Jack was journeying to Wales, he had to pass through this wood, and being weary, sat down and fell asleep. The giant came by just at this time, and seeing by the name on Jack's belt, who he was, lifted him up in his arms and carried him to the castle. But the rustling of the leaves, as they passed through the wood, soon awoke Jack, who was much alarmed when he found himself in the clutches of Blunderbore.

Yet this was nothing to his great fright soon after; for the giant carried him into an immense room, where lay the limbs of persons who had been lately killed to satisfy his ravenous appetite; and he told Jack, with a horrid grin, that men's hearts, eaten with pepper and vinegar, were his nicest food; and that he thought he should make a dainty meal off his heart. The giant then locked Jack up, while he went to fetch another giant to enjoy a dinner off Jack's flesh with him.

While he was away, Jack heard some very dreadful groans and cries from various parts of the castle; this so shocked him, that he was almost out of his mind. He ran to the window, and saw the two giants coming along side by side. This window was right over the gates of



the castle. Now, thought Jack, either my death or my freedom is at hand.

Jack looked about to see what had best be done, and discovered two strong ropes in the room in which he was confined, so he made a slip-knot at the end of each, and as the giants were coming through the gate, he threw the nooses over their heads, and pulled with all his might, till he almost strangled them. When they were quite black in the face, he slid down the ropes, which he had previously made fast to the iron bar across the window, and stabbed them to the heart; thus he saved his own life.



Jack then took a great bunch of keys from the pocket of Blunderbore, and determined on making a search through the castle, for he felt satisfied that the piteous cries he had heard proceeded from some unhappy captives who were confined within its walls. He passed through several rooms, and at last he came to a gloomy dungeon, where he discovered three ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, and almost starved to death. These poor sufferers he instantly released, and told them that as he had killed both the giant and his brother, he would give them the castle and all it contained, as some recompense for the sufferings they had undergone. Jack then politely gave them the keys of the



castle, and after taking his leave of them, pursued his journey into Wales.

At night, losing his way, he came to a large house, and knocked at the door; when, to his great terror, there came forth a monstrous giant, who spoke to Jack civilly, and told him he might sleep there. Jack was shown to a bed-room, but he could not sleep, for he suspected some treachery from the giant; so he groped about the room, and finding a log of wood, he put it into the bed, and then hid himself. Presently the giant came in with his huge club, and struck many heavy blows where Jack had placed the wood, thinking he had killed him.

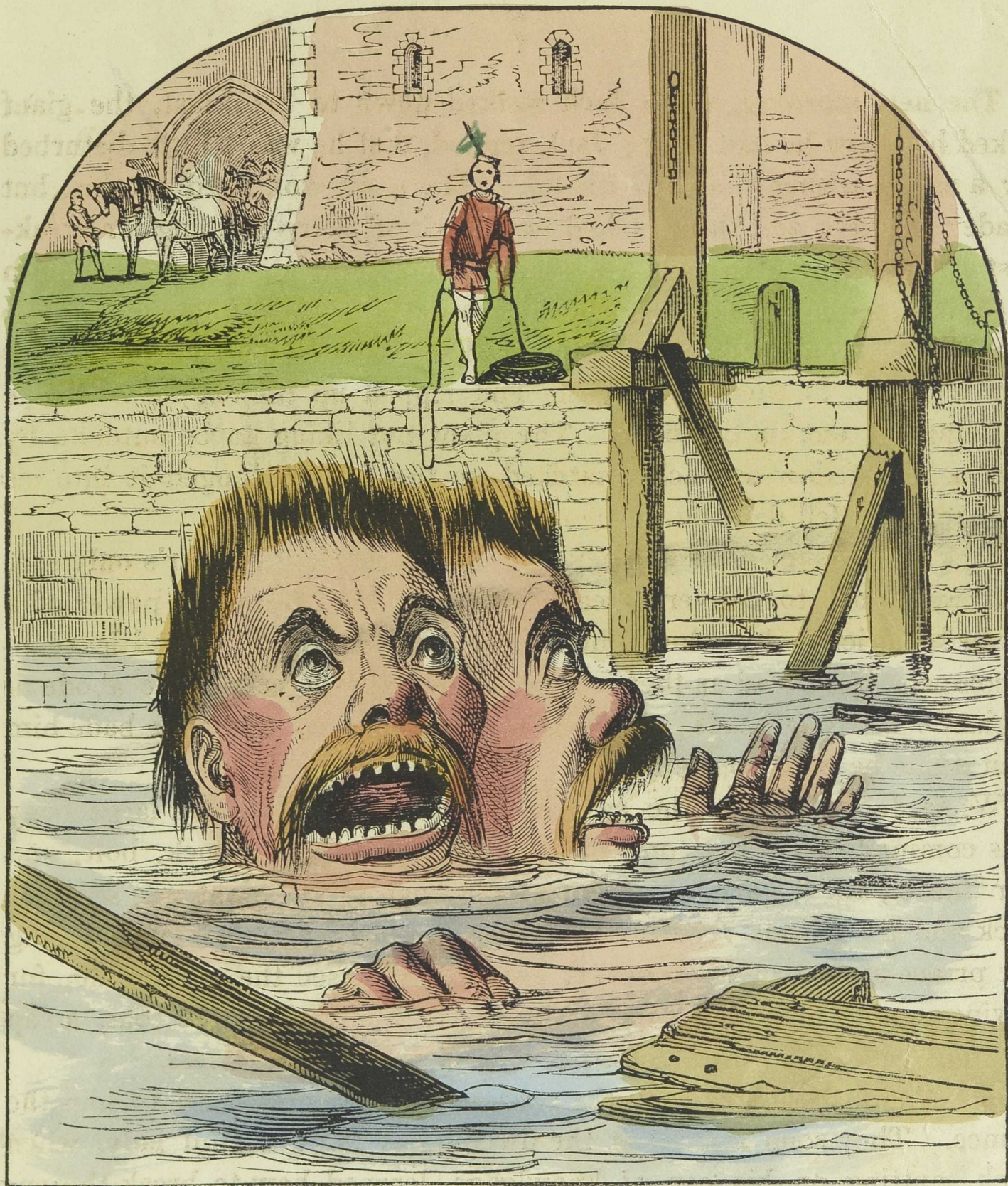
The next morning, when Jack walked down to breakfast, the giant asked him how he had slept; Jack replied, that he was a little disturbed by a rat smacking him with his tail. The giant wondered at this, but made no reply; and then fetched two bowls of hasty-pudding for breakfast. Jack wanted to make the giant believe that he could eat as much as himself, so he put a bag inside his coat, and slipped the pudding into it, while he seemed to eat it. Jack told the giant that he would show him a trick; he then took a knife and ripped up the bag, and all the pudding fell out on the floor. The giant not liking to be outdone by such a little fellow as Jack, snatched up the knife, plunged it into his stomach, and fell dead on the floor.

Jack now resumed his journey, and met with King Arthur's only son, who was about to deliver a beautiful young lady from the power of a wicked magician, by whom she was enchanted. Jack begged leave to accompany him; and as they journeyed on, they perceived the abode of a giant with three heads. The prince was alarmed, but Jack bade him wait while he went to see him.

When Jack came to the castle, he told the giant that a large army was coming to kill him; on which he entreated Jack to lock, bolt, and bar him in, till the army had gone. As soon as the giant was secured, Jack and the prince regaled themselves for the night. Next morning the prince started on his journey, and Jack released the giant, who, for having, as he thought, saved his life, gave him an invisible coat, a cap of knowledge, a sword of sharpness, and shoes of swiftness.

Jack thanked the giant for the presents, and then set off to join the prince. They soon arrived at the dwelling of the beautiful lady, when Jack, putting on his cap of knowledge, learned how to break the enchantment and release the lady. So putting on his shoes of swiftness, and his coat of darkness, he went into the forest, where the lady was forced to meet the magician every night. When the lady came, she held a handkerchief to the magician, which Jack cut in half with his sword, and then, with one blow, cut off the magician's head. The enchantment being ended, the lady was married to the prince, and they all returned to the palace, where Jack was introduced to the prince's father.

The king, who had heard much about Jack's valour, gave him some valuable presents. And while the festivities in honour of the return of the prince and his bride were going on, a monstrous giant, with two



heads, made his way to the king's palace, vowing to be revenged on the Giant Killer. Jack now set to work to overcome this formidable foe, and for this purpose, he had the draw-bridge over the moat sawn almost through; and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he went out to meet the giant. As soon as the giant saw Jack, he ran after him across the bridge, when his great weight caused it to break, and he fell into the moat. Jack got a rope, which he passed over the giant's head, and with a team of horses, drew him about in the water, until he killed him. In return for Jack's bravery and skill, the king gave him his daughter in marriage.

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