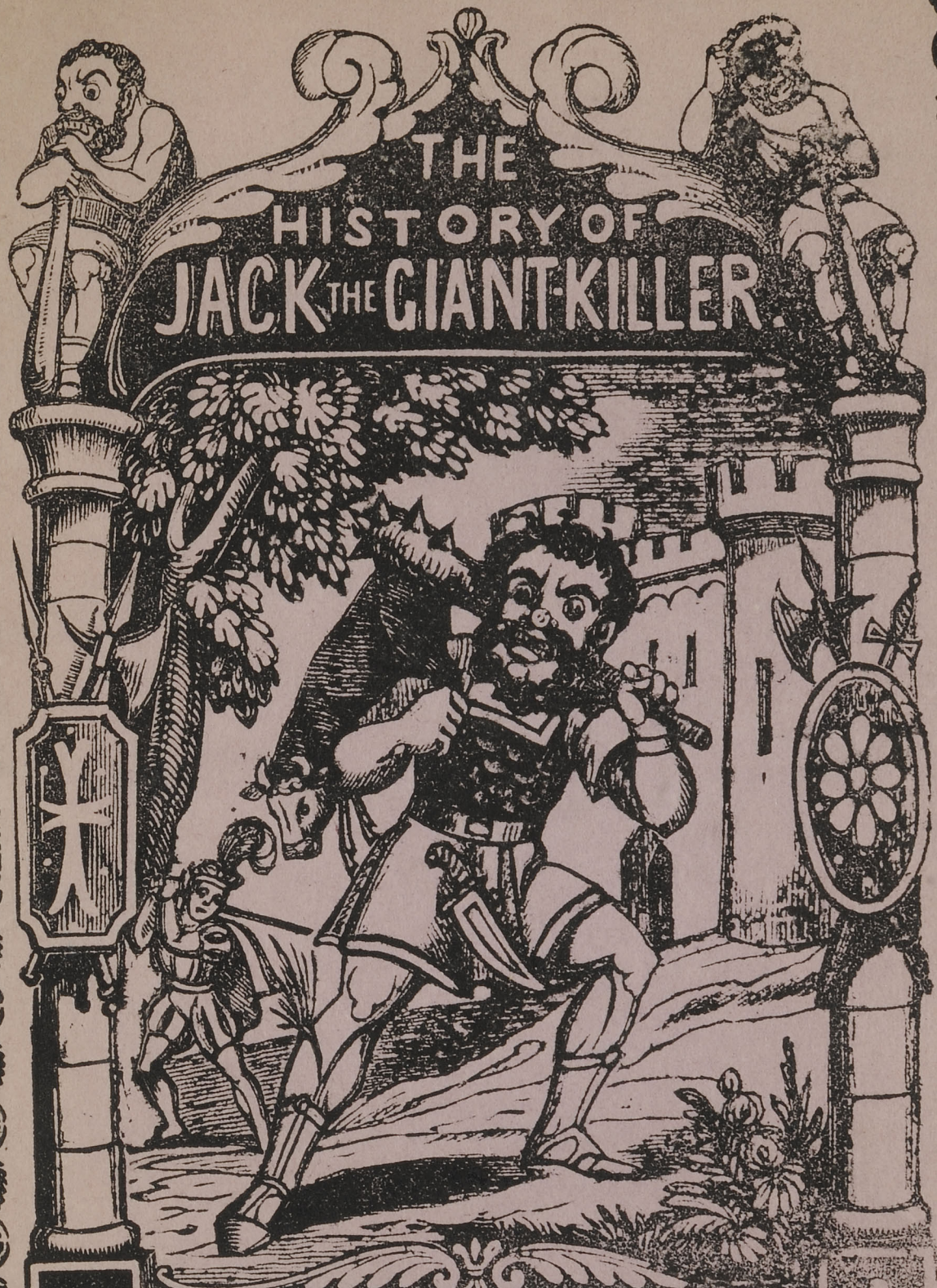


THE
HISTORY OF
JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.



LONDON
PUBLISHED BY BENTLEY & BELL

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.



IN the reign of King Arthur, near to the Land's End of England, in the county of Cornwall, lived a worthy farmer, who had a son named Jack. He was brisk, and of ready wit, so 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; for the very learned he baffled by his cunning and sharp inventions.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall, was kept by a large Giant of eighteen feet high, and about three yards in circumference, and 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 cattle, which often were his prey; for when he wanted food, he would wade over to the main land, where he would well furnish himself with what he could find, for the people at his approach would all forsake their habitations. Then would he seize their cows and oxen at once, and as for their ducks and geese, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of candles. This he practised for many years, so that a great part of the county of Cornwall was much impoverished by him.

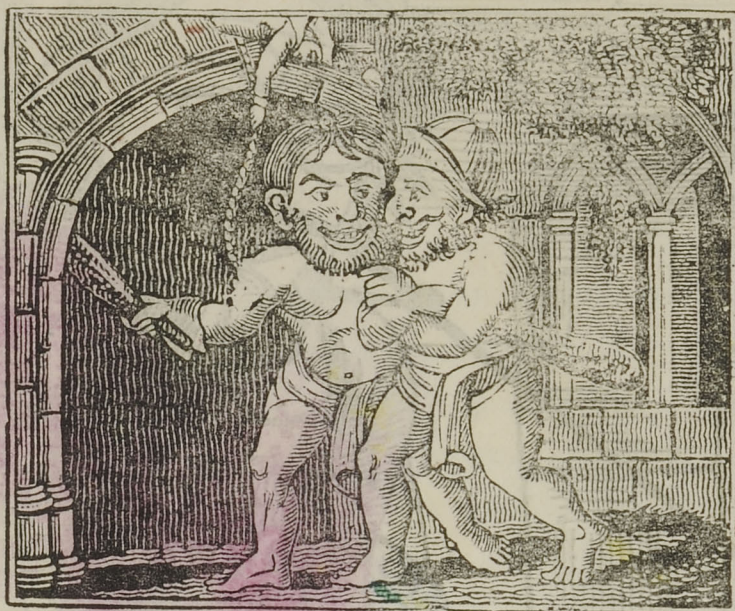


Jack undertook to destroy this monster ; so furnished himself with a horn, shovel and pickaxe, and over the mountains he went in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, fell to work, and in the morning had dug a pit twenty-feet deep, and almost as broad, covering it over with long sticks and straws, and strewing a little mould over it, it appeared like plain ground ; then putting the horn to his mouth, he blew tantivy ; which noise awoke the giant, who came roaring towards Jack, crying out, " you incorrigible villain, you shall pay dearly for disturbing me ; for I will broil you for my breakfast." These words were no sooner spoken, than he tumbled headlong into the pit, and his heavy fall made the foundation of the mountains shake. O ! Mr. Giant, quoth Jack, where are you now ? Faith you are in Lob's pond, where I will plague you for the threatening me. What do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast ? Will no other diet serve you but poor Jack ? Having thus tantalized the giant for a while, he struck him a terrible blow on the crown with his pole-axe, so that he tumbled down, and with a groan expired. This done, Jack threw dirt on him, and so buried him ; then, searching the cave, he found much treasure.

When the magistrates, who employed Jack, heard that the job was over, sent for him, declaring that he should henceforth be called, " Jack the Giant Killer ;" and in honour thereof, presented him with a sword and embroidered belt, upon which these words were written in letters of gold—

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

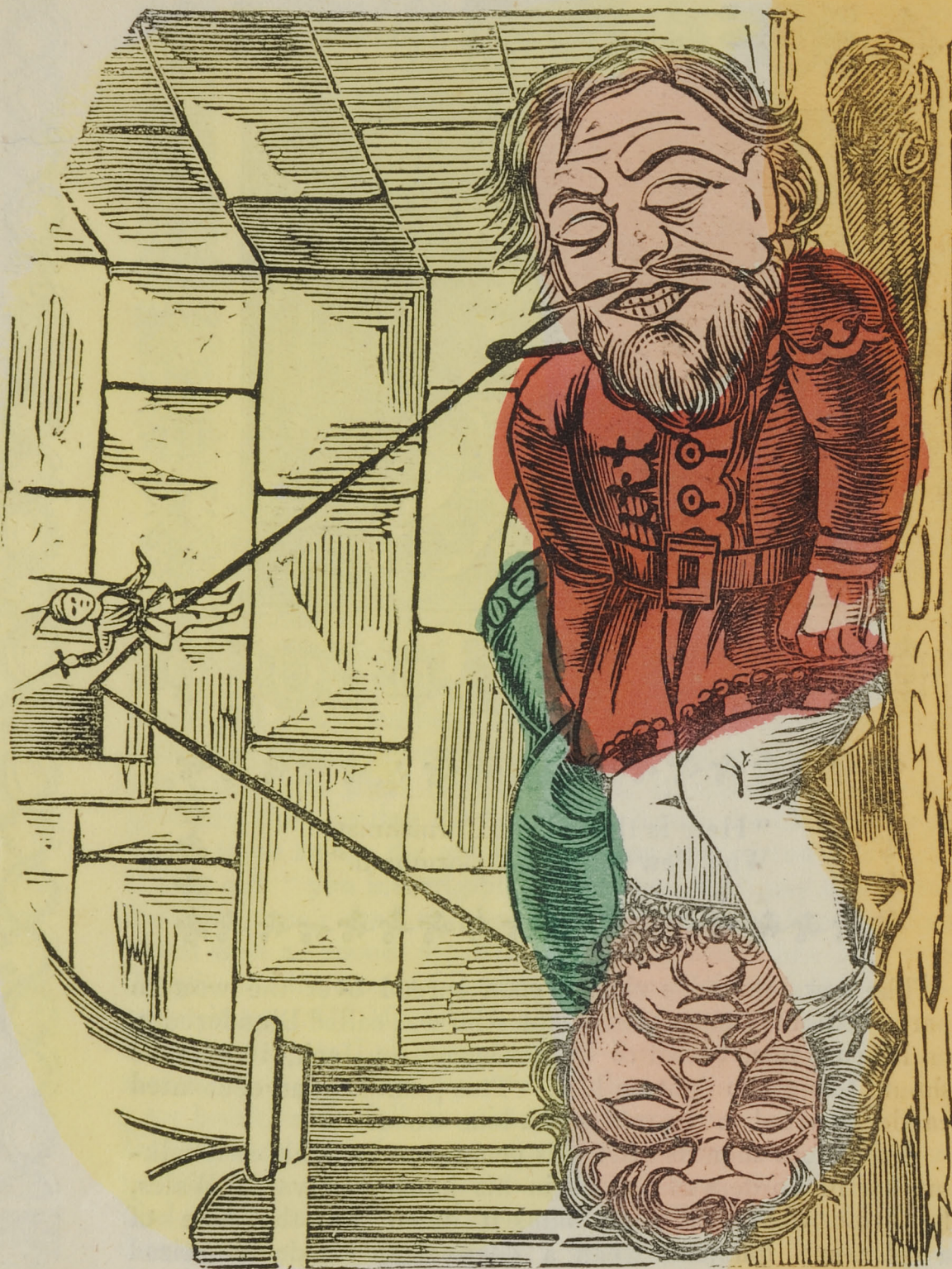
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“Here is the valiant Cornishman,
Who slew the Giant Cormoran.”

The news of Jack's victory soon spread over the western parts. Another monstrous giant, who was called Blunderbore, on hearing this, vowed to be revenged on Jack, if ever he should happen to light on him. This giant kept an enchanted castle, situated in the midst of a lone wood.

About four months after this occurrence, as Jack was walking by the borders of a wood in his journey towards Wales, he grew weary, and sat himself down by the side of a pleasant fountain, when a deep sleep suddenly seized him. At this time, the Giant, coming here for water, found him, and, by the letters upon his belt, immediately knew him to be Jack; so, without any words, he took him upon his shoulder to carry him to his enchanted castle. As he passed through a thicket, the rustling of the boughs awakened Jack, who, finding himself in the hands of the Giant, was much surprised, though it was but the beginning of his



terror. On entering the wall of the castle, he found the floor covered with skulls and bones of the dead. He then brought him into a large parlour, where lay the blood and quarters of one lately slain, and in the next room, were hearts and livers; when the Giant, to terrify him, said that men's hearts were his favourite diet, which he ate with pepper and vinegar, adding, that he did

not question but Jack's heart would make him a curious breakfast. This saying, he locked Jack up in an upper room, leaving him there, while he went to fetch another Giant, who lived in the same wood, that he might partake of the destruction of poor Jack.

Jack, ready to run distracted, went to the window, and opened the casement, and beheld both of the Giants coming together. Now, said 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 gate, he threw one of the ropes over each of the Giants' heads, and then threw the other end across a beam, when he pulled with all his might, till he had throttled them. And then, fastening the rope to a beam, he beheld the two Giants both black in the face, and, sliding down the rope, he came to 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 he found three ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, and almost starved to death, who told Jack that their husbands had been slain by the Giant, and who had been kept many days without food, in order to force them to eat the flesh of their murdered husbands, which of course they could not do, if they were starved to death. Sweet ladies, said Jack, I have now destroyed the monster, and his brutal brother, too; by which means I have obtained your liberties. This said, he presented them with the keys, and proceeded on his journey to Wales.

Jack having got but little money, he thought it prudent to travel hard; but, losing his way, he was benighted, and could not get a place of entertainment, until, 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; but, to his amazement and terror, out came a monstrous Giant, with two heads. He did not seem quite so fiery as the other two, for he was a Welsh Giant, and all that he did was by secret malice, under the false show of friendship. On Jack telling him his condition, he immediately bade him welcome,

shewing him into a room with a bed, where he might take his night's rest. Upon this, Jack undressed himself, and as the giant was walking towards another apartment, he heard him say 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.” *
 * * * * *

Ha! ah! says Jack: is that one of your Welsh tricks? I hope to be as cunning as you. Then getting out of bed, he found a thick billet, and laid it in the bed in his stead, and hid himself behind the curtains.

In the middle of the night, the 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 then he went back to his own room, thinking he had broken all Jack's bones.

Early in the morning, Jack put a bold face upon the matter, and walked into the Giant's room, to thank him for his lodging. The Giant started when he saw him, and began to stammer out, O dear me, is it you? Pray, how did you sleep last night? Did you hear or see anything in the dead of the night?

Nothing worth speaking of, said Jack, carelessly: a rat, I believe, gave me two or three raps 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 bring two great bowls of hasty pudding for their breakfast. Jack wanted to make the Giant believe that he could eat as much as him; so he contrived to button a leathern bag inside his coat, and slipped the hasty pudding into it, while he seemed to put it into his mouth. When breakfast was over, he said to the Giant, now I will show you a fine trick. He then took hold of a knife, and ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty pudding tumbled out upon the floor.

The giant thinking Jack had really cut his belly open, took a knife, and said, “ Hur can do that:” he then ripped up his belly, and dropped down dead.

When Jack had thus tricked the Welsh monster, he travelled over high hills and lofty mountains, and on the third day he came to a large and spacious forest, through which is

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road lay. Scarcely had he entered the forest, when, on a sudden, he heard very dreadful shrieks and cries. On looking round, he saw a monstrous Giant, dragging along, by the hair of their heads, a knight and his beautiful lady. His heart melted at the sight; when, alighting from his horse, he put on an invisible coat, which he had received as a present, and ran up to him, when aiming a blow at his legs, he cut them both off at one stroke, and the giant fell on the ground with such force as made the earth to shake.

The knight and his lady not only returned Jack thanks for their deliverance, but also invited him to their house. No, said Jack, I must haste to relieve a duke's daughter, who is enchanted. He then took his leave of them.

The enchanter lived in a castle with a huge giant, on the top of a mountain guarded by two griffins; but as Jack had his invisible coat on, he reached the castle without being seen by any of them. On the castle gate he found a golden trumpet: under which were written these lines—

✿
✿ “Whoever can this trumpet blow,
✿ The giant soon shall overthrow.” ✿
✿ ✿



As soon as Jack read this, he seized the trumpet, and blew such a shrill blast as made the gates fly open, and the foundations of the castle tremble.

The giant and conjurer now knew that their wickedness was over; when the conjurer flew away on the back of a dragon, the charm ceased, and the castle fell to pieces and killed the giant, and every knight and lady who had been enchanted returned to their proper shapes.

The ruins of the castle then vanished like smoke, and left the giant's body. His head Jack cut off, and sent to King Arthur.

The company then rested at an old man's hermitage, and next day they set out for their respective homes. Jack and the duke's daughter then departed to the court of King Arthur, where they arrived safe, and were joyfully received, both by the king and by the good old duke.

As Jack's fame 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. After this his Majesty gave him a large and beautiful estate, as a reward for his past services, upon which he and his lady lived the rest of their days in peace and content, for they were beloved and respected by all who knew them.

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