

The Story of Jack and the Giants eBook

The Story of Jack and the Giants

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Title: The Story of Jack and the Giants

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In this e-text illustrations have been labelled according to their descriptions at the beginning of the book.

[Illustration: By Stratagem of a Pit Jack killeth the Giant Cormoran
Frontispiece
the death of the Giant Cormoran]

[Illustration: Jack listeneth to Stories of Giants and Fairies
Title page]

TheStory
of
Jack and the Giants.

Illustratedwith
Thirty-Five Drawings by Richard Doyle.
Engraved by G. and E. Dalziel.

[Illustration]

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[Illustration]

The Story of Jack and the giants
illustrated by Richard Doyle

Jack listeneth to Stories of Giants and Fairies. *Title page*

Jack at Rest. *Initial*

The Giant cometh

Cormoran carryeth off his Booty

Panick of the Shepherd. *Initial*

By Stratagem of a Pit Jack killeth the Giant Cormoran. *Frontispiece*

The Justices present unto Jack a Sword and Belt

A Giant looketh out for Jack. *Initial*

The deceitful Civility of the Welsh Giant

He partaketh of his Pudding with Jack

Jack measureth with the Legs of a Giant. *Initial*

Jack alarmeth his Three-headed Uncle

Jack delivereth the Lady from the Enchanter

Jack is dubbed a Knight by King Arthur

He is accourted by Ladies. *Initial*

He discovereth a Giant above the Trees

Jack slayeth the Giant, and delivereth a Knight and his Lady

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The Giant's Brother awaiteth his return

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Jack slaketh his Thirst at the end of his Labours

The Story

of

Jack and the Giants.

[Illustration: Jack at Rest. *Initial*]

During the reign of good King Arthur there lived in the County of Cornwall, near to the Land's End of England, a wealthy farmer, who had an only son named Jack. Jack was a brisk boy, and of a ready wit: he took great delight in hearing stories of Giants and Fairies, and used to listen eagerly while any old woman told him of the great deeds of the brave Knights of King Arthur's Round Table.

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

[Illustration: The Giant cometh]

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a huge and monstrous Giant, eighteen feet in height, and about three yards in compass, of a fierce and grim countenance, the terror of all the neighbouring towns and villages. He dwelt in a cave in the middle of the Mount; and he was such a selfish monster that he would not suffer any one to live near him. He fed on other men's cattle, which often became his prey; for whensoever he wanted food, he would wade over to the mainland, where he would furnish himself with whatever came in his way.

[Illustration: Cormoran carryeth off his Booty]

[Illustration: Panick of the Shepherd. *Initial*]

Panic seized the inhabitants at his approach, they forsook their habitations, and took flight, while the Giant seized upon their cattle, making nothing of carrying half-a-dozen oxen on his back at a time; and as for their sheep and hogs, he would tie them by dozens round his waist. This course he had followed for many years, so that a great part of the county was impoverished by his depredations.

Jack resolved to kill this monster; and taking with him a horn, a shovel, and a pickaxe, he went over to the Mount in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, when he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and nearly as broad, and had covered it over with long sticks and straw. Then strewing a little mould upon it, he made it appear like plain ground. Then Jack placed the horn to his mouth, and blew with all his might such a loud tantivy, that the Giant awoke and rushed towards Jack, exclaiming:

"You saucy villain, why are you come here to disturb my rest? you shall pay dearly for this. I will take you home, and broil you whole for my breakfast."

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He had no sooner uttered this cruel threat, than, tumbling into the pit, he made the very foundations of the Mount to shake.

“Oh, oh, Mr. Giant,” said Jack, “where are you now? do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast? will nothing else serve you but poor Jack?”

Thus did little Jack torment the big Giant, as a cat does a mouse when she knows it cannot escape; and when he had tired of that amusement, he gave the monster a heavy blow with a pickaxe on the very crown of his head, which tumbled him down, and killed him on the spot. When Jack saw that the Giant was dead, he filled up the pit with earth, and went to search the cave, which he found contained much treasure.

Jack then made haste back to rejoice his friends with the news of the Giant’s death.

[Illustration: The Justices present unto Jack a Sword and Belt]

Now, when the justices of Cornwall heard of this valiant action, they sent for Jack, and declared that he should always be called

Jack the Giant Killer;

and they also gave him a magnificent sword and an embroidered belt, upon which was emblazoned, in letters of gold,

*“This is the valiant Cornish man
Who slew the Giant Cormoran”*

The news of Jack’s victory soon spread over all the west of England; so that another Giant, named Blunderbore, hearing of it, vowed to be revenged on Jack, if ever it was his fortune to light on him. This Giant kept an enchanted castle, situated in the midst of a lonely wood.

Now Jack, about four months after his last exploit, riding near this castle in his journey towards Wales, being weary, lay down near a pleasant fountain in the wood, and quickly fell asleep. Presently the Giant, coming to the fountain for water, discovered him; and as the lines written on the belt shewed who he was, he immediately took Jack on his shoulders, and carried him towards his castle. Now, as they passed through a thicket, the rustling of the boughs awakened Jack, who was terribly frightened to find himself in the clutches of Blunderbore. Yet this was nothing to his fright soon after; for when they reached the castle, he beheld the floor covered all over with skulls and bones of men and women.

The Giant took him into a large room, where lay the limbs of persons that had been lately killed; and he told Jack, with a horrid grin, that men’s hearts, eaten with pepper and vinegar, were his nicest food, and that he thought he should make a dainty meal on

his. When he had said this, he locked Jack up in the room, while he went to fetch another Giant, who lived in the same wood, to enjoy a dinner off poor Jack.

While he was away. Jack heard dreadful shrieks, and groans, and cries, from many parts of the castle; and soon after he heard a mournful voice repeat these lines:

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“Haste, valiant Stranger, haste away, Lest you become the Giant’s prey. On his return he’ll bring another Still more savage than his brother;— A horrid, cruel monster, who, Before he kills, will torture you. Oh, valiant Stranger! haste away, Or you’ll become these Giants’ prey.”

This warning was so shocking to poor Jack, that he was ready to go mad. He ran to the window, and saw the two Giants coming along arm in arm. This window was right over the gates of the castle.

“Now,” thought Jack, “either my death or freedom is at hand.”

Now there were two strong cords in the room. Jack made a large noose with a slip-knot at the ends of both these; and as the Giants were coming through the iron gates, he threw the ropes over their heads. He then made the other ends fast to a beam in the ceiling, and pulled with all his might till he had almost strangled them. When he saw that they were both quite black in the face, and had not the least strength left, he drew his sword, and slid down the ropes; he then killed the Giants, and thus saved himself from the cruel death they meant to put him to.

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

“Charming Ladies,” said Jack, “I have put an end to the monster and his wicked brother; and I give you this castle, and all riches that it contains, to make you some amends for the dreadful pains you have felt.”

He then very politely gave them the keys of the castle, and went further in his journey to Wales.

[Illustration: A Giant looketh out for Jack. *Initial*]

Caring very little for riches, Jack had not taken any of the Giant’s wealth for himself, and having but little money of his own, he thought it best to travel as fast as he could.

At length he lost his way; and when night came on, he was in a valley between two lofty mountains. He thought himself lucky at last in finding a large and handsome house. He went to it, and knocked at the gate; when, to his surprise, there came forth a Giant with two heads. He spoke to Jack very civilly, for he was a Welsh Giant, and all the mischief he did was done under a show of friendship. Jack told him he was a benighted traveller, when the monster bade Jack welcome, and led him into a room where he could pass

the night. But though he was weary he could not sleep, for he heard the Giant walking backward and forward in the next room, saying,

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

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“Say you so?” quoth Jack; “that is like one of your Welsh tricks.”

Then getting out of bed, Jack groped about the room, and at last found a billet of wood; he laid it in his place in the bed, and hid himself in a corner of the room. 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 went to his own room, thinking he had broken all Jack’s bones.

[Illustration: The deceitful Civility of the Welsh Giant]

Early in the morning Jack walked into the Giant’s room to thank him for his lodging. The Giant started when he saw him, and began to stammer out,—

“Pray, how did you sleep last night? Did you hear or see any thing in the dead of the night?”

“Nothing worth speaking of,” said Jack, carelessly; “a rat, I believe, gave me three or four flaps with its tail, but I soon went to sleep again.”

[Illustration: He partaketh of his Pudding with Jack]

The Giant did not answer a word, but brought in two bowls of hasty-pudding for their breakfasts. Jack wanted to make the Giant believe that he could eat as much as himself, so he contrived to button a leathern bag inside his coat, and slipped the pudding into the bag instead of his mouth.

When breakfast was over, he said to the Giant, “I will shew you a fine trick: I could cut my head off one minute, and put it on sound the next. But see here!”

He then took a knife, ripped up the bag, and all the pudding fell on the floor.

“Odds splutter hur nails,” cried the Giant, who was ashamed to be outdone by Jack, “hur can do that hurself!”

So he snatched up the knife, plunged it into his stomach, and in a moment dropped down dead.

Jack having thus outwitted the monster, went further on his journey.

PART THE SECOND.

[Illustration: Jack measureth with the Legs of a Giant. *Initial*]

Jack travelled on until he met with King Arthur's only son, who was seeking all through Wales for a very beautiful lady that was enchanted. Jack asked leave to be the Prince's attendant, and the Prince granted his request.

After a long day's journey, when night drew on, the Prince was anxious to secure a lodging, but they had no means to hire one, for both the Prince and Jack had spent all their money; but Jack said,—

“Never mind, master, we shall do well enough, for I have an uncle who lives within two miles of this place; he is a huge and monstrous Giant, with three heads; he'll fight five hundred men in armour, and make them flee before him.”

[Illustration: Jack alarmeth his Three-headed Uncle]

“Alas!” quoth the Prince, “what shall we do there? he'll certainly chop us up at a mouthful. Nay, we are scarce enough to fill his hollow tooth.”

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"It is no matter for that," quoth Jack; "I myself will go before, and prepare the way for you; therefore tarry and wait till I return."

Jack then rode off full speed, and coming to the gate of the castle, he knocked so loud that the echo from the neighbouring hills resounded like thunder.

The Giant, terribly vexed, roared out, "Who's there?"

"None but your poor cousin Jack," answered he.

"What news with my poor cousin Jack?"

He replied, "Dear uncle, heavy news."

"God wot," quoth the Giant, "prithee what heavy news can come to me? I am a Giant with three heads; and besides, though knowest I can fight five hundred men in armour, and make them fly like chaff before the wind."

"Oh, but," quoth Jack, "here's the Prince a-coming, with a thousand men in armour, to kill you, and destroy all that you have!"

"Oh, cousin Jack," said the Giant, "this is heavy news indeed! I will immediately run and hide myself, and thou shalt lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys till the Prince is gone."

Jack joyfully complied with the Giant's request; and fetching his master, they feasted and made themselves merry, whilst the poor Giant lay trembling in a vault underground.

In the morning, Jack furnished the Prince with a fresh supply of gold and silver, and then sent him three miles forward on his journey, as he would then be pretty well out of the smell of the Giant. Jack then returned, and liberated the Giant from the vault, who asked what he should give him for saving the castle.

"Why," quoth Jack, "I desire nothing but the old coat and cap, together with the old rusty sword and slippers which are at your bed's head."

Quoth the Giant, "Thou shalt have them; and pray keep them for my sake, for 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. These may be serviceable to you: therefore take them, with all my heart."

They soon arrived at the dwelling of the beautiful lady, who was under the power of a wicked Magician. She received the Prince with fair words, and made a noble feast for him; when it was ended, she arose, and wiping her mouth with a fine handkerchief, said,

“My Lord, you must shew me this handkerchief to-morrow, or lose your head.” She then went out of the room, taking the handkerchief with her.

The Prince went to bed right sorrowful; but Jack put on his cap of knowledge, which told him that the lady was forced, by the power of the enchantment, to meet the wicked Magician every night in a forest. Jack now put on his coat of darkness and his shoes of swiftness, and went to the forest, where he saw the lady give the handkerchief to the Magician, Whereupon Jack; who was surrounded by a host of evil spirits, with his sword of sharpness, at one blow cut off his head, and regained the handkerchief for the Prince; the enchantment was ended in a moment and the lady restored to her virtue and goodness.

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[Illustration: Jack delivereth the Lady from the Enchanter]

She returned with the Prince to the court of King Arthur, where they were received with welcome; and the valiant Jack was made one of the Knights of the Round Table.

[Illustration: Jack is dubbed a Knight by King Arthur]

PART THE THIRD.

[Illustration: He is accourted by Ladies. *Initial*]

Jack resolved not to live in idleness for the future, but to do what services he could for the honour of the king and the nation. He therefore humbly besought King Arthur to furnish him with a horse and money, that he might travel in search of new and strange exploits. "For," said he to the King, "there are many Giants yet among the mountains of Wales, and they oppress the people: therefore, if it please you, Sire, to favour my designs, I will soon rid your kingdom of these Giants and monsters."

When the King heard this offer, and thought of the cruel deeds of these bloodthirsty Giants and savage monsters, he gave Jack every thing proper for such a journey.

[Illustration: He discovereth a Giant above the Trees]

Thereupon Jack took leave of the King, the Prince, and all the Knights of the Round Table, and set off. He went along over hills and mountains, until he came to a large forest, through which his road lay. On a sudden he heard piercing shrieks. He forced his way through the trees, and saw a huge Giant, thirty-five feet high, dragging along by the hair of their heads a Knight and his beautiful Lady, one in each hand, with as much ease as if they had been a pair of gloves. Jack shed tears at such a sight, and alighting from his horse, and tying him to an oak, put on his invisible coat, under which he carried his sword of sharpness.

[Illustration: Jack slayeth the Giant,
and delivereth a Knight and his Lady]

When he came up to the Giant, he made many strokes at him, but could not reach his body, on account of his great height. Still, he wounded his ankles in many places: at last, putting both hands to his sword, and aiming with all his might, he cut off both the Giant's legs below the garter; so that his body tumbled to the ground.

[Illustration: Jack setteth his foot on the Giant's neck. *Initial*]

Jack then set one foot upon his neck, and cried out, "Thou cruel wretch! behold I give thee the just reward of thy crimes." And so plunging his sword into the Giant's body, the

monster gave a loud groan and yielded up his life; while the noble Knight and his Lady were joyful at their deliverance. They heartily thanked Jack for what he had done, and invited him to their house to refresh himself.

“No,” said Jack, “I cannot be at ease till I find out this monster’s dwelling.”

The Knight, hearing this, grew sad, and replied, “Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second hazard. This monster lived in a den under yonder mountain, with a brother of his, more fierce and cruel than himself: therefore, if you should go thither and perish in the attempt to overthrow this wicked brother, it would be heart-breaking to me and my lady; so let me persuade you to go with us, and desist from any farther pursuit.”

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"Nay," said Jack, "even if there were twenty, I would shed the last drop of my blood before one of them should escape me. When I have done this task, I will return and visit you."

Jack had not rode a mile and a half before he came in sight of the mouth of the cavern; and nigh the entrance of it he beheld the other Giant sitting on a huge rock, with a knotted iron club in his hand, waiting for his brother. His eyes flashed like flames of fire, his face was grim, and his cheeks seemed like two flitches of bacon; the bristles of his beard were as thick rods of iron wire; and his locks of hair hung down like curling snakes. Jack alighted from his horse, and turned him into a thicket; then he put on his invisible coat, and drew a little nearer, to behold this figure; and said softly, "O monster, are you there! it will not be long before I shall take you fast by the beard."

[Illustration: The Giant's Brother awaiteth his return]

The Giant, all this while, could not see him, by reason of his invisible coat: then Jack came quite close to him, and struck a blow at his head with his sword of sharpness; but, missing his aim, only cut off his nose, whilst the Giant roared like loud claps of thunder. And though he rolled his glaring eyes round on every side, he could not see who had given him the blow; yet he took up his iron club, and began to lay about him like one that was mad.

"Nay," said Jack, "if this is the case, I will kill you at once." So he slipped nimbly behind him, and jumping upon the rocky seat as the Giant rose from it, he thrust his sword up to the hilt in his body. After a hideous howling, the Giant dropped down dead.

When Jack had thus killed these two monsters, he searched their cave for treasure. He passed through many dark windings, which led him to a room paved with freestone; at the end of it was a boiling cauldron, and on the right hand stood a large table, where the Giants used to dine. He then came to a window secured with iron bars, through which he saw a number of wretched captives, who cried out, when they saw Jack, "Alas! alas! young man, are you come to be one among us in this horrid den?"

[Illustration: The Knight and his Lady thank
Jack for their delivery]

"I hope," said Jack, "you will not tarry here long but pray tell me, what is the meaning of your captivity?"

[Illustration: Jack releaseth the captive Ladies]

"Alas!" said one, "we have been taken by the Giants that hold this cave, and are kept till they have a feast; then the fattest of us is killed and cooked. It is not long since they took three for this purpose."

“Say you so?” said Jack; “I have given them such a dinner that it will be long enough before they want more.” The captives were amazed at his words. “You may believe me,” said Jack; “for I have slain both the monsters, and sent their heads in a wagon to King Arthur, as trophies of my victory.”

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To shew them that what he said was true, he unlocked the gate, and set them all free. Then he led them to the great room, where they feasted plentifully. Supper being over, they searched the Giant's coffers, and Jack shared the store among the captives. Jack started at sunrise to the house of the Knight, whom he had left not long before.

[Illustration: *Initial*]

Presently Jack reached the Knight's castle, where he was received with the greatest joy. In honour of the hero's exploits, a grand feast was given, which lasted many days. The Knight also presented Jack with a beautiful ring, on which was engraved the Giant dragging the knight and the lady by the hair, with this motto:

*"We were in sad distress, you see,
Under the Giant's fierce command,
But gained our lives and liberty
By valiant Jack's victorious hand."*

Among the guests present at the feast were fire aged gentlemen, who were fathers to some of those captives who had been freed by Jack from the dungeon. These old men pressed round him with tears of joy, and returned him thanks. One day the bowl went round merrily, and every one drank to the health and long life of the gallant hero. The hall resounded with peals of laughter and joyful cries.

[Illustration: A pale Herald interrupteth the Feast]

But, lo! to the midst, a herald, pale and breathless with haste and terror, rushed in, and told the company, that Thundel, a Giant with an immense head, having heard of the death of his two kinsmen, was come to take revenge on Jack, and that he was now near the house, and the country-people all flying before him.

At this dismal news, the very boldest of the guests trembled; but Jack drew his sword, and said, "Let him come; I have a tool to pick his teeth with. Pray, ladies and gentlemen, walk into the garden, and you shall joyfully behold the Giant's defeat and death."

The knight's castle was surrounded by a moat, thirty feet deep and twenty wide, over which lay a drawbridge. Jack set men to work, to cut the bridge on both sides, near the middle; and then dressing himself in his invisible coat, went against the Giant with his sword of sharpness. As he came close to him, though the Giant could not see him, yet he cried out,—

"Fie! foh! fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman; Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread."

"Say you so, my friend?" said Jack; "you are a clever miller indeed!"

“Art thou,” cried the Giant, “the villain who killed my kinsmen? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, and grind thy bones to powder.”

“You must catch me first,” said Jack; and throwing off his invisible coat, he put on his shoes of swiftness, and began to run; the Giant following him like a walking castle, making the earth shake at every step.

[Illustration: The Stratagem of Jack with the Giant Thundel]

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Jack led him round and round the walls of the castle, that the company might see the monster; and to finish the work. Jack ran over the drawbridge, the Giant going after him with his club: but when the Giant came to the middle, where the bridge had been cut on both sides, the great weight of his body made it break, and he tumbled into the water, where he rolled about like a large whale. Jack now stood by the side of the moat, and laughed and jeered at him, saying,

“I think you told me you would grind my bones to powder; when will you begin?”

[Illustration: Jack maketh sport of Him,
and draggeth Him out of the Moat]

[Illustration: Jack maketh sport of Him,
and draggeth Him out of the Moat]

The Giant foamed horridly at the mouth with fury, and plunged from side to side of the moat; but he could not get out to have revenge on his little foe. At last Jack ordered a cart-rope to be brought to him; he then drew it over his great head, and by the help of a team of horses, dragged him to the edge of the moat, where he cut off the monster's head; and before he either ate or drank, he sent it to the court of King Arthur. He then went back to the table with the company, and the rest of the day was spent in mirth and good cheer.

[Illustration: His Head goeth to Court]

PART THE FOURTH.

[Illustration: The Lady of the Knight. *Initial*]

Courted and flattered as he was, yet after staying with the Knight and his lady for some time, Jack grew weary of such an idle life, and set out again in search of new adventures. He went over hills and dales without meeting any, till he came to the foot of a very high mountain. Here he knocked at the door of a small and lonely house, and an old man, with a head as white as snow, let him in.

“Good father,” said Jack, “can you lodge a traveller who has lost his way?”

“Yes,” said the hermit, “I can, if you will accept such fare as my poor house affords.”

Jack entered, and the old man set before him some bread and fruit for his supper. When Jack had eaten as much as he chose, the hermit said,—

“My son, I know you are the famous conqueror of Giants; now, at the top of this mountain is an enchanted Castle, kept by a Giant named Galligantus, who, by the help



of a vile Magician, gets many knights and ladies into his Castle, where he changes them into the shape of beasts. Above all, I lament the hard fate of a duke's daughter, whom they seized as she was walking in her father's garden, and brought hither through the air in a chariot drawn by two fiery dragons, and turned her into the shape of a deer. Many knights have tried to destroy the enchantment, and deliver her; yet none have been able to do it, by reason of two fiery Griffins, who guard the gate of the Castle, and destroy all who come nigh: but as you, my son, have an invisible coat, you may pass by them without being seen; and on the gates of the Castle you will find engraved by what means the enchantment may be broken."

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[Illustration: The Giant Galligantus]

Jack promised that, in the morning, at the risk of his life, he would break the enchantment; and, after a sound sleep, he arose early, put on his invisible coat, and got ready for the attempt. When he had climbed to the top of the mountain, he saw the two fiery Griffins; but he passed between them without the least fear of danger, for they could not see him because of his invisible coat. On the Castle-gate hung a golden trumpet, under which were these lines:—

*"Whoever doth this Trumpet blow,
Shall cause the Giant's overthrow!"*

[Illustration: Jack passeth the Fiery Griffins]

[Illustration: Destruction of Galligantus]

As soon as Jack had read this, he seized the trumpet, and blew a shrill blast, which made the gates fly open, and the very Castle itself tremble. The Giant and the Conjuror now knew that their wicked course was at an end, and they stood biting their thumbs, and shaking with fear. Jack, with his sword of sharpness, soon killed the Giant; and the Magician was then carried away by a whirlwind; and every knight and beautiful lady, who had been changed into birds and beasts, returned to their proper shapes. The Castle vanished away like smoke, and the head of the Giant Galligantus was sent to King Arthur. The knights and ladies rested that night at the old man's hermitage, and next day set out for the Court.

[Illustration: Jack goeth with Company to Court]

Jack then went up to the King, and gave his majesty an account of all his fierce battles. Jack's fame had spread through the whole country; and, at the King's desire, the Duke gave him his daughter in marriage, to the joy of all the kingdom. After this, the King gave Jack a large estate, on which he and his lady lived the rest of their days in joy and content.

[Illustration: Jack slaketh his Thirst at the end of his Labours]

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