

THE
HISTORY
OF
JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

With Three Copperplates.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TABART AND CO. AT THE
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1804.

PUBLISHED BY
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Taylor and Co. Printers, Black Horse Court.

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER.

IN the reign of the celebrated king Arthur, there lived near the Land's-end of England, in the county of Cornwall, a worthy farmer who had an only son named Jack. Jack was a boy of a bold and enterprising temper; he delighted in stories of magicians, conjurors, giants, and fairies, and used to listen with the greatest attention while his father talked of the valiant deeds of the famous knights of king Arthur's round table.

When Jack was sent to take care of the sheep and oxen at their pasture, he used to amuse himself with planning battles, sieges, and the means of defeating or surprising an enemy. He disdained the common sports of children; but at wrestling scarcely any one could equal him; or, if he met with an adversary whose strength was superior to his own, his skill and address always ensured him the victory.

In those days St. Michael's Mount of Cornwall, which rises out of the sea at some distance from the main land, was inhabited by an enormous giant. He was eighteen feet high, and three yards round: his fierce and savage countenance was the terror of all the neighbourhood.

He dwelt in a gloomy cavern on the very top of the mountain, and used to wade over to the main land in search of his prey. At his approach the people forsook their habitations; and when he had glutted his ferocious appetite upon their cattle, he would throw half a dozen oxen upon his back, and tie three times as many sheep and hogs round his waist, and so march back to his gloomy dwelling. The giant had followed this practice during many years, and the coast of Cornwall was greatly impoverished by his ravages, when Jack valiantly undertook to destroy him.

Jack furnished himself with a horn, a shovel, a pick-axe, and a dark lantern; and

and in the beginning of a long winter's evening he swam to the mount, where he immediately fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and almost as many broad, which he covered on the surface with sticks and straw; and lightly strewing some of the earth over them, gave it the appearance of solid ground. He then, putting his horn to his mouth, blew so loud and long a tantivy, that the giant awoke and came towards Jack, roaring in a voice like thunder—"You impudent villain, you shall pay dearly for disturbing my repose. I will broil you for my breakfast."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when, advancing one step further, he tumbled headlong into the pit, and his fall shook the foundations of the mountain.

"O ho! Mr. Giant," quoth Jack, looking into the pit, "have you found your way so quickly to the bottom? How is your appetite now? Will nothing serve you for

breakfast this cold morning but broiling poor Jack?"

The giant now making an effort to rise, Jack struck him a terrible blow on the crown of the head with his pick-axe; which killed him at once; and hastened back to congratulate his countrymen on the destruction of their cruel foe.

Now when the magistrates of Cornwall heard of this valiant exploit, they sent for Jack, declaring he should henceforth be called Jack the Giant-Killer, and also presented him with a sword and belt, upon which was embroidered in letters of gold,

This is the valiant Cornish man

Who slew the giant Cormoran.

The news of Jack's victory was soon spread over the western parts of England; and another giant, called old Blunderbore, vowed to be revenged on Jack if it should ever be his fortune to get him into his power.

This giant kept an enchanted castle,
situated

situated in the midst of a lonely wood; and about four months after the death of Cormoran, as Jack was travelling to Wales, he passed through this wood; and being very weary, he sat down to rest by the side of a pleasant fountain, when a deep sleep suddenly seized upon him.

The giant coming to the fountain for water, found him there, and by the lines on his belt knew him to be Jack, and lifting him up laid him gently upon his shoulder to carry him to his enchanted castle. As he passed through the thicket, the rustling of the leaves awakened Jack; who finding himself in the clutches of Blunderbore was not a little frightened,—though this was only the beginning of his terrors, for on entering the castle he beheld the floor covered with human skulls and bones.

The giant carried him into a large parlour, where lay the hearts, blood, and quarters of persons lately slain; and he told Jack, with a horrible grin, that men's hearts,

Jack rescues the knight and his Lady.



London, Published Sep 1844, by Tabart & Co.

eaten with pepper and vinegar, were his favourite food, and also that he expected to make a curious repast on his heart. This said, he locked Jack up in that room, while he went to fetch a brother giant who lived in the same wood, to enjoy with him the destruction of honest Jack.

While he was absent, dreadful shrieks, groans, and cries assailed the ears of Jack, and presently he heard a mournful voice repeat these lines :

Haste, valiant stranger, haste away,
Lest you become the giant's prey.
On his return he'll bring another
Still more furious than his brother—
A savage, cruel monster, who
Before he kills will torture you.
O valiant stranger ! haste away,
Or you'll become these giants' prey.

This warning so affrighted poor Jack, that he was ready to run distracted. He flew to the window, and beheld afar off the two giants coming arm in arm together.

This

This window was immediately over the gates of the castle. "Now," thought Jack, "my death or deliverance is at hand."

There happened to be two strong cords in the room, at the end of each of which he made a large noose with a slip knot; and as the giants were unlocking the iron gates, he threw the ropes over each of their heads, and then fastening the other end to a beam in the ceiling, he pulled with all his might till he had nearly strangled them. Seeing that they were both black in the face, and quite unable to make the least resistance, he drew his sword, and, sliding down the ropes, slew both the giants, and thus delivered himself from their intended cruelty.

Then taking a great bunch of keys from the pocket of Blunderbore, he entered the castle; where, upon strict search through all the apartments, he found three ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, and almost starved to death; who told him that

E

their

their husbands had been murdered by the cruel giants, who had afterwards condemned them to be starved to death, because they had refused to eat the flesh of their murdered husbands.

“Ladies,” said Jack, “I have destroyed the monster and his wicked brother; and this castle, and all the wealth that it contains, I give to you, in consideration of the dreadful sufferings you have undergone.” He then, with all imaginable politeness, presented them with the keys of the castle, and proceeded on his journey to Wales.

Jack, having thus forborne to enrich himself by his conquests over the giants, and being possessed of very little mopey, thought it prudent to travel with the utmost speed. At length losing his way, he was benighted in a lonely valley between two lofty mountains, where after wandering for some hours without seeing any habitation, he thought himself very fortunate in finding a large and handsome house.

Passing

Passing the outer court, he knocked boldly at the gate, when to his horror and amazement there came forth a monstrous giant with two heads. He accosted Jack very civilly—for he was a Welch giant—and all the mischief he did was by private and secret malice, under the show of friendship and complaisance. Jack telling him that he was a benighted traveller, who had lost his way, was immediately kindly welcomed by the huge monster, and conducted into a chamber where there was a good bed for him to pass the night in.

Jack undressed himself quickly; but, weary as he was, he could not go to sleep; and presently he heard the giant walking backward and forward in the next apartment, and repeating to himself;

“Though 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?” thought Jack. “Are these your tricks upon travellers? But I

F

hope

hope to prove as cunning as you are.”— Then getting out of bed, he groped about the room, and at length found in the chimney a large thick billet of wood, and, laying it in his place, hid himself in a dark corner of the room.

In the middle of the night the giant came with his enormous club, and struck several heavy blows on the bed, in the very place where Jack had cunningly laid the billet, and then returned to his own room, supposing 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 apartment to thank him for his lodging. The giant started at his approach, and with great difficulty stammered out— “ Oh! dear me! is it you? Pray how did you sleep last night? Did you hear any thing, or see any thing, in the dead of the night?”

“ Nothing of any consequence,” said Jack carelessly. “ A troublesome rat, I believe, gave me three or four slaps with his

his tail, and disturbed me a little; but I soon went to sleep again.”

The giant, more and more confused, did not answer a word, but went to bring two great bowls of hasty pudding for their breakfast. Jack, unwilling to let the giant know that he was not able to eat as much as himself, contrived to button a leathern bag within his coat, into which he slipped the hasty pudding, while he pretended to put it into his mouth; and when breakfast was done, he said to the giant—“ Now I will show you a most extraordinary trick. I can heal all wounds with a touch. I could cut off my head one minute, and the next place it sound again on my shoulders. I will give you an example:”—and seizing the knife, he ripped up the leathern bag, and all the hasty pudding tumbled out upon the floor.

“ Ods splutter hur nails,” cried the Welch giant, who was ashamed to be outdone by such a little fellow as Jack, “ hur

can do that hursel:”—and snatching up the knife he plunged it into his stomach, and instantly dropped down dead.

Jack, having thus outwitted the Welch monster, proceeded on his journey; and a few days afterwards he met with king Arthur's only son, who had obtained leave of his father to travel into Wales to deliver a beautiful lady from the power of a wicked magician, that held her in his enchantments. Finding that the young prince was travelling without attendants, Jack begged leave to be his servant; to which request the royal youth consented, with numberless expressions of kindness.

The prince was a handsome, courteous, and accomplished knight, and so generous that he gave money to every person he met; and at length an old woman having begged of him the last penny he had, he turned to Jack and said—“How are we now to subsist in my intended journey?”

“Leave that to me, sir,” answered

Jack:

Jack: “I will provide for my prince.”—Night, however, came on, and the prince began to grow uneasy to think where they should lodge. “Sir,” said Jack, “be of good courage. Two miles further there lives a huge giant, whom I know very well; he has three heads, and will fight five hundred men in armour, and make them fly before him.”

“Alas!” replied the king's son, “we had better never have been born than encounter such a monster. We shall scarcely fill one of his hollow teeth.”—“My lord,” said Jack, “leave me to manage him, and do you wait here patiently till I return.”

The prince remained, and Jack rode on at full speed. On coming to the gates of the castle, he knocked with such a force that he made all the neighbouring hills resound. The giant, with a voice like thunder, roared out, “Who is there?” He was answered, “No one but your poor cousin Jack.”

H

“Well,”

“Well,” quoth the giant, “what news with my poor cousin Jack?” He replied, “Dear uncle, heavy news.”—“Pr’ythee, what heavy news can come to me? I am a giant with three heads; and besides, I can fight five hundred men in armour, and make them fly like chaff before the wind.” “Alas!” said Jack, “here is the king’s son coming with two thousand men in armour to kill you, and to destroy the castle and all that you have.”

“Oh! cousin Jack, this is heavy news indeed: but I have a large vault under ground, where I will immediately hide myself, and thou shalt lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys till the king’s son is gone.”

Now Jack, having secured the giant in the vault, returned and fetched the prince to the castle, and they were both heartily merry with the wine and other dainties which were in the house. So that night they rested in very pleasant lodgings, whilst the poor giant lay trembling and shaking

shaking with fear in the vault under ground.

Early in the morning, Jack furnished the king’s son with a fresh supply of gold and silver, and set him three miles forward on his journey; concluding at that distance he was pretty well out of the smell of the giant.

He then returned to let his uncle out of the hole, who asked Jack what he should give him as a reward for the preservation of his castle. “Why, good uncle,” said Jack, “I desire nothing but the old coat and cap, together with the old rusty sword and slippers that are hanging at your bed’s head.” Then said 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 cut asunder whatever you strike; and the shoes are of extraordinary swiftness: these may be serviceable in all times of danger; therefore take them with all my heart.” Jack, with

with many thanks to the giant, departed and followed the prince.

Jack having overtaken the king's son, they soon arrived at the dwelling of the beautiful lady who was under the dominion of a wicked magician. She received the prince very courteously, and prepared a magnificent banquet for him; which being ended, she rose, and, taking an embroidered handkerchief, wiped her mouth and said, "My lord, you must submit to the custom of my palace: to-morrow morning I command you to tell me on whom I bestow this handkerchief, or lose your head." She then put the handkerchief in her bosom, and retired.

The young prince went to bed very sorrowful: but Jack put on his cap of knowledge, which instructed him, that the lady was obliged by the power of the enchantment to meet the wicked magician every night in the middle of the forest. Jack instantly put on his coat of darkness and his shoes
of

of swiftness, and was there before her. When the lady came, she presented the handkerchief to the magician. Jack with his sword of sharpness instantly cut off his head: the enchantment was immediately dissolved, and the lady restored to her former virtue and goodness.

She was married to the prince with great pomp and solemnity on the following day, and soon after returned with her royal husband and a numerous company to the court of king Arthur; where they were received with loud and joyful acclamations; and the valiant hero Jack, for the many and great exploits that he had done for the good of his country, was immediately made one of the knights of the round table.

JACK having been hitherto successful in all his undertakings, resolved not to be idle for the future, but to perform what services he could for the honour of the king and the nation: he therefore humbly besought his
majesty

majesty to furnish him with a horse and money; that he might travel in search of new and strange adventures. "For," he said to the king, "there are many giants yet living among the mountains, in the remote parts of Wales, to the unspeakable terror and distress of your majesty's subjects: therefore, should it please you, sire, to encourage me in my enterprises, I will speedily rid the kingdom of these giants and devouring monsters in the human shape." Now when the king heard his propositions, and had duly considered the mischievous practices of these blood-thirsty giants, devouring monsters, he furnished him with every necessary for his progress; after which Jack took leave of the king, the prince, and all the knights of the round table, and departed, taking with him his cap of knowledge, his sword of sharpness, his shoes of swiftness, and his invisible coat, the better to perform the wonderful enterprises that lay before him.

He

He travelled over high hills and lofty mountains, and on the third day he came to a large and spacious forest, through which his road lay. Scarcely had he entered the forest, when on a sudden he heard very dreadful shrieks and cries. He pressed on through the trees, and beheld a monstrous giant dragging along by the hair of their heads a handsome knight and his beautiful lady. Their tears and cries melted the heart of honest Jack to pity and compassion: he alighted from his horse, and, tying him to an oak tree, put on his invisible coat, under which he carried his sword of sharpness.

When he came up to the giant, he made several strokes at him, but could not reach his body, on account of the enormous height of the terrible creature; but he wounded his thighs in several places; and at length, putting both hands to his sword, and aiming with all his might, he cut off both the giant's legs, just below the garter;

and

and the trunk of his body tumbling to the ground, made not only the trees shake, but the earth itself tremble with the force of his fall.

Then Jack setting his foot upon his neck exclaimed, "Thou barbarous and savage wretch, behold, I am come to execute upon thee the just reward of all thy crimes." And instantly plunging his sword into the giant's body, the huge monster gave a hideous groan, and yielded up his life into the hands of the victorious Jack the Giant-killer, whilst the noble knight and his virtuous lady were both joyful spectators of his sudden death and their deliverance.

The courteous knight and his fair lady not only returned Jack hearty thanks for their deliverance, but also invited him to their house, there to refresh himself after this dreadful encounter, as likewise to receive a reward for his good services. "No," said Jack, "I cannot be at ease till I find out the den that was this monster's habitation."

The

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

"Nay," answered Jack, "if there be another, even if there were 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 taking directions to find their habitation, he mounted his horse, leaving the knight and the lady to return home, while he went in pursuit of the deceased giant's brother.

Jack had not rode above a mile and a half, before he came in sight of the mouth,
of

of the cavern; near to the entrance of which he beheld the other giant sitting on a huge block of fine timber, with a knotted iron club lying by his side, waiting for the return of his brother loaded with his barbarous prey. His eyes appeared like terrible flames of fire; his countenance was grim and ugly, and his cheeks looked like two flitches of bacon; the bristles of his beard seemed to be very thick rods of iron wire, and his long locks of hair hung down upon his broad shoulders like curling snakes or hissing adders.

Jack alighted from his horse, and put him into a thicket; then with his coat of darkness he approached somewhat 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."

The giant, all this while, could not see his foe, by reason of his invisible coat: so coming close up to him, Jack struck a blow at his head with his sword of sharpness; but

but missing something of his aim he only cut off the nose of the giant, who then roared like loud claps of thunder. And though he rolled his glaring eyes around on every side, he could not see whence the blow came that had done him that mischief: yet taking up his iron club, he began to lay about him like one that was mad with pain and fury.

"Nay," said Jack, "if this is the case, I had better dispatch you presently." So slipping dexterously behind him, and jumping nimbly upon the block of timber as the giant rose from it, he stabbed him in the back; when after a few howls he dropped down dead.

Jack cut off his head, and sent it with that of his brother, whom he had killed in the forest, to king Arthur, by a waggon which he hired for that purpose, together with an account of all his prosperous undertakings.

Jack, having thus dispatched these two monsters, resolved to enter into the cave in search

search of the giant's treasure. He passed through a great many turnings and windings, which led him at length to a great room paved with freestone, at the upper end of which was a boiling cauldron, and on the right hand stood a large table whereon he supposed the giants used to dine.

He then came to an iron grate, where a window was secured with bars of iron, through which he beheld a number of miserable captives, who, seeing Jack at a distance, cried out, "Alas! alas! young man, art thou come to be one amongst us in this most horrible den?" "I hope," said Jack, "you will not tarry here long; but, I pray, what is the meaning of this captivity?"

"Alas!" said one poor old man, "I will tell you, sir: we are persons that have been taken by the giants that hold this cave, and we are kept till such time as they have a fancy for an extraordinary feast; and then the fattest of us all is slaughtered, and prepared for their devouring jaws. It is not long

long since they took three for the same purpose. Full many a time have they dined upon murdered men."

"Well," said Jack, "I have given them such a dinner, that it will be long enough ere they have occasion for any more." The captives were amazed at his words. "You may believe me," says Jack; "for I have slain them with the edge of the sword, and have sent their monstrous heads in a waggon to the court of king Arthur, as trophies of my glorious victory." And in testimony of the truth of what he said, he unlocked the iron gate, setting the captives at liberty; who all rejoiced like condemned malefactors at the sight of a reprieve. Then leading them to the great room, he placed them round the table, and set before them two quarters of beef, with bread and wine; upon which they feasted plentifully.

Supper being over, they searched the giant's coffers, the store of which Jack

equally

equally divided among the captives, who gratefully thanked him for their happy deliverance. The next morning they departed to their respective habitations, and Jack to the knight's house, whom, with his lady, he had also delivered from the hands of these monstrous giants.

It was at the hour of sunrise in the morning that Jack mounted his horse to proceed on his journey. He arrived at the knight's house about noon, where he was received with all the demonstrations of joy imaginable, by the grateful knight and his beautiful lady, who, in honour of Jack's victory, gave a splendid entertainment which lasted many days, and to which all the nobility and gentry in that part of the country were invited.

When the company were assembled, the knight related the noble exploits of Jack, and presented to him, as a token of gratitude, a most magnificent ring, on which was engraved

graved the picture of the giant dragging the knight and the lady by the hair, with this motto round it:

Behold in dire distress were we,
Under a giant's fierce command;
But gain'd our lives and liberty,
From valiant Jack's victorious hand.

Among the guests then present were five aged gentlemen, who were fathers to some of those miserable captives who had been liberated by Jack from the dungeon of the giants. As soon as they understood that he was the person who had performed such wonders, the venerable men, with tears of gratitude, pressed round him to return him thanks for the happiness he had procured them and their families.

After this, the bowl went round, and every one drank to the health and long life of the gallant conqueror. Mirth increased, and the hall resounded with peals of laughter and joyful acclamations.

But,

But, suddenly, a herald pale and breathless with haste and terror rushed into the midst of the company, and told them that Thundel, a ferocious giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his kinsmen, was come from the north to be revenged on Jack; and that he was now within a mile of the house; the country people all flying before him, like chaff before the wind.

At these tidings, the very boldest of the guests trembled with confusion and dismay, while the undaunted Jack brandished his sword, and said "Let him come; I have a rod to chastise him also. Pray, gentlemen and ladies, do me the favour to walk into the garden, and you shall soon be spectators of the giant's death and destruction." To this they all consented, heartily wishing him success in his dangerous enterprise.

The good knight's house was situated in an island encompassed with a moat thirty feet deep and twenty wide, over which lay a draw-bridge. Jack employed two men to

cut the bridge on each side, almost to the middle; and then dressing himself in his coat of darkness, he went against the giant with his sword of sharpness. As he came close up to him, though the giant could not see him by reason of his invisible coat; yet he was sensible of some impending danger, which made him cry out,

"Fa, 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."

"Say you so, my friend?" said Jack.
"You are a monstrous miller indeed."
"Art thou," cried the giant, "the villain who killed my kinsmen? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, and grind thy bones to powder." "You must catch me first," said Jack; and throwing off his coat of darkness, and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he began to run; the giant following after like a walking castle, making the earth to shake at every step.

Jack led him round and round the walls of the house, that the company might see this monster in nature; and to finish the work, Jack ran over the draw-bridge, the giant pursuing him with his club: but coming to the middle, where the bridge had been cut on each side by Jack's order, with the great weight of his body, and vast steps it broke, and he tumbled into the water, and rolled about like a large whale.

Jack standing by the moat laughed at him, and jeered him, saying: "I think you told me you would grind my bones to powder: when do you begin?"

The giant foamed at his horrid mouths with fury, and plunged from side to side of the moat; but he could not get out to be revenged upon his adversary.

Jack, at length, ordered a cart-rope to be brought to him: he cast it over the giant's two heads, and by the help of a team of horses he dragged him to the edge of the moat, where, in the presence of the knight and

and his guests, he cut off the monster's heads, and, before he ate or drank, sent them both to the court of king Arthur. He then returned to table with the rest of the company, and the remainder of the day was spent in mirth and good cheer.

After being hospitably entertained by the knight for some time, Jack grew weary of so idle a life, and set out in search of new conquests. He travelled over hills and dales, through gloomy forests and pleasant groves, without meeting with any adventure; till arriving at the foot of an exceedingly high mountain, he knocked at the door of a small and lonely house, when an old man, with a head as white as snow, arose and let him in.

"Good father," said Jack, "can you lodge a benighted traveller who has lost his way?" "Yes," replied the venerable hermit, "I can, if you will accept such accommodation as my poor house affords." Jack therefore entered, and the old man set before him bread and fruit for his supper. When

When Jack had satisfied his hunger, the hermit addressed him as follows: "My son, I well know you are the far-famed conqueror of giants, and on the top of this mountain is an enchanted castle, maintained by a giant, named Galligantus, who by the help of a vile magician gets many knights into his castle, where he transforms 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 transformed her into the shape of a deer. Several knights have endeavoured to destroy the enchantment, and effect her deliverance; yet none have been able to accomplish it, by reason of two fiery griffins, who guard the gates of the castle, and destroy all who approach it. You, my son, being furnished with an invisible coat, may pass by them undiscovered, and on the gates of the castle you will find engraved"

engraved by what means the enchantment may be broken."

Jack promised, in the morning, at the hazard of his life, to break the enchantment; and having refreshed himself with a sound sleep, arose early, put on his invisible coat, and prepared for the enterprise.

When he had climbed to the top of the mountain, he discovered the two fiery griffins, between which he passed without the least fear of danger; for they could not see him, because he was clothed in his invisible coat. On the castle-gate he found a golden trumpet, under which were these lines:

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

Jack had no sooner read this motto, than he seized the golden trumpet, and blew a shrill blast, which made the gates fly open, and the foundations of the castle tremble.

The giant and the conjurer knowing that their wicked practices were at an end, stood biting their thumbs and shaking with fear. Jack with his sword of sharpness dem-
lished

lished the giant; and the magician was immediately carried away by a whirlwind.

Thus was the whole enchantment dissolved, and every valiant knight and beautiful lady, who had been transformed into birds and beasts, returned to their former shapes. The castle, though it seemed of vast strength, vanished away like smoke, and the head of the giant Golligantus was immediately conveyed to king Arthur.

The knights and ladies rested that night at the old man's hermitage, and on the next day set out for the court. Jack presented himself to the king, and related the history of all his fierce encounters.

His fame ran through the whole country; and the duke at the king's desire gave his daughter in marriage to Jack, to the joy of all the kingdom. After which, the king gave him a plentiful estate, on which he and his lady lived the residue of their days in joy and contentment.

THE END.