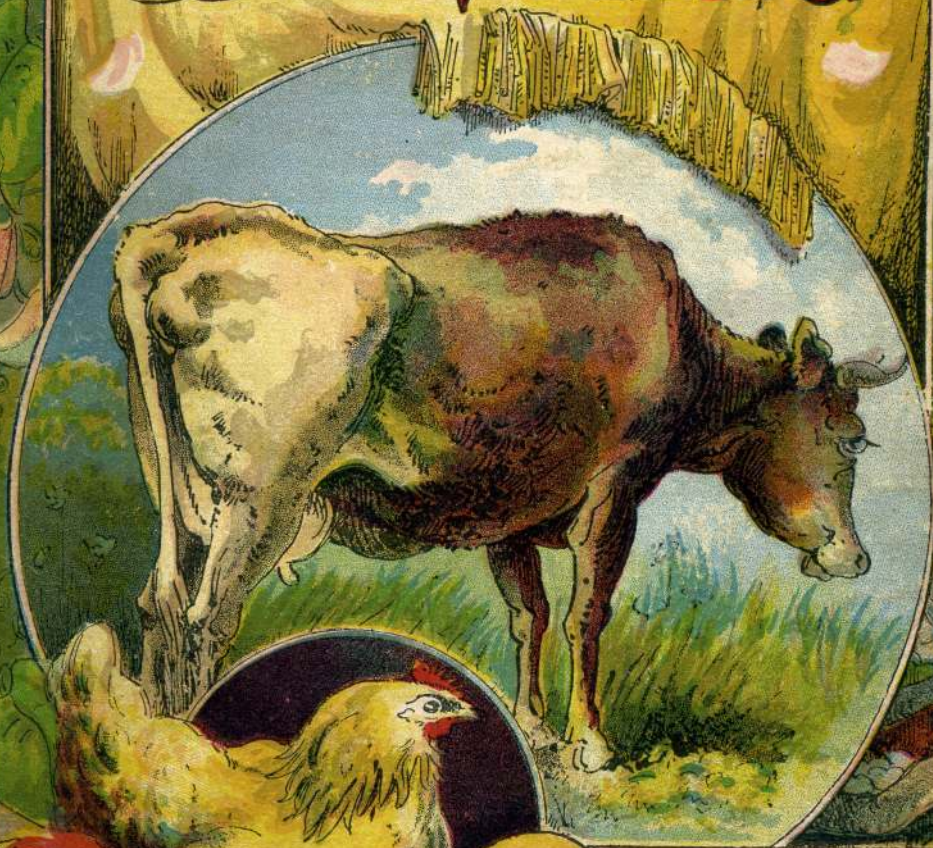


JACK & The Beanstalk:



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LITTLE
FOLKS
SERIES

JACK AND THE BEAN STALK.

THERE was once a poor widow woman who lived in a little cottage along with her son Jack. Jack was a healthy young lad, but he did not like to work, and would sit at his ease all day long, and not think of the many ways in which he might make himself useful. His poor mother had to work all the harder on this account, and often went without food herself that her dear Jack might have full and plenty. It would have grieved Jack had he known of this, for he had not a bad heart, but was so heedless that he scarcely noticed what was going on around him.

The times grew hard. There was no way in which Jack's mother could earn money, and so she had to sell many of her things in order to buy the necessaries of life.

When she had parted with all but her cow, she said to her son, "O Jack, how can you be so idle and see your poor mother in want? I must now sell our cow to buy bread, and then we shall have no milk to quench our thirst. This is a great trial!" and the poor woman wept bitterly.

Jack was moved at the sight of his mother's tears, and made up his mind at once to do something for her relief.

"Let me take the cow to market," said he, "and I'll be bound that I'll get a good price for her."

"All right," said his mother; "make the best bargain you can;" and great was her pride at seeing her handsome son

Jack march off down the road, leading the cow that was, indeed, worth its weight in gold.

Jack had not gone far, when he met a farmer who was on the lookout for cattle that he wished to buy.

“That’s a queer looking animal you have there,” said the farmer to Jack. “What are you going to do with her?”

“Sell her if I can,” said Jack.

“Then you’d better be quick about it before she gets any thinner.”

“She’s a mighty nice cow,” said Jack, “and whoever buys her gets a treasure.”

“Treasure!” said the farmer. “Nonsense! She’ll never pay for her keeping. Sell her to me or you’ll lose by her.”

“What’ll you give?” asked Jack.

Now the farmer had his hat full of beans, of all sorts of colors. These had attracted the attention of Jack, who was curious to know where he got them, and what he was going to do with them. In answer to Jack’s question the farmer said, “Well, the old cow isn’t worth much, but if you’ve a mind to take this hatful of beans in exchange for her, we’ll call it a bargain.”

Jack was delighted to get the cow off his hands so easily, and went back to his mother with the beans in his hat, feeling sure that she would be more than pleased to discover what a fine head he had for business.

But he was mistaken; for as soon as Jack showed the beans to his mother, she was in a great rage.

She had planned to do a great many things with the money she got for the cow, and to have nothing but a paltry mess of beans, was a disappointment too great to be borne calmly.



9 Jack's Mother resents the bargain: 19



The first glimpse of a strange land:

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“O Jack! Jack! what have you done?” she exclaimed. Now we have no milk to drink, and no money to buy food! How could you be such a foolish, foolish boy?” and saying this she threw the beans out of the window, and sent Jack off supperless to bed.

The next morning when Jack went to the window he saw a great vine at the side of the house which was not there the day before. It was not like a common vine, but was all twisted and woven together, and the top of it was quite lost in the clouds.

Jack looked at it in amazement, and then declared his intention of climbing up that long ladder to see where it led to. His mother cried out, “O Jack, don’t think of such a thing! You will surely fall and break your neck, and then I’ll be left all alone in this cold, cold world!” But Jack paid no heed to her words or her tears. He could climb like a cat; and away he went, hand over hand, and was soon lost sight of in the clouds that seemed to shut him in.

When Jack reached the top of the ladder he fell down on the ground, and lay for some time in a sort of stupor, for he was tired with his long journey. As soon as he came to himself he sat up, and looked around to see what kind of a country he was in.

It was a curious place, and while Jack was making up his mind what he should do, and which way he should go, a beautiful young woman came and stood beside him. “I am a fairy,” she said, “and will be your friend. In yonder castle lives a giant, who killed your father and robbed him of all his possessions. Your mother fled from him with you in her arms, and dares not even mention his name, for fear he

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will punish her in some dreadful way. It is his fault that you are so poor; so set your wits to work to get back what he owes you. Be brave and bold, and when you have need of me I will be sure to help you."

Jack went up to the castle, and knocked at the door. There was no one at home but the giant's wife, and she said, "My husband is a bad man, and it is not safe for you to stop here. He feeds on human flesh, and has gone out now to hunt for fresh meat."

Jack said he was too tired and hungry to go further, and coaxed so hard that the giant's wife, who had a kind heart, brought him into the warm kitchen and set out a nice supper for him.

Jack had just finished his meal, when a mighty tramp—tramp—tramp was heard, that shook the house and made the dishes rattle. "That is my husband!" said the giant's wife, who whisked Jack into a chest and shut the lid on him not a moment too soon.

The giant came in hungry and cross, for he had had no luck that day, and at once cried out, "I smell fresh meat!"

"Oh, no you don't," said his wife; and she set his supper before him to divert his attention, for well she knew that he smelt live Jack. He was soon busy devouring beef, mutton, and bread, and ate enough you would think to feed a small army. And oh, the amount of beer he drank to wash it all down!

The feast was soon at an end, however, and then the giant called to his wife to bring him his hen. Jack lifted the lid of the chest so that he could see what the giant was at, and he saw a fine looking fowl brought out and placed on the table;

The Giant suspects.





Jack with the
Giant's gold.

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and each time the giant said "Lay!" the hen would lay an egg of solid gold. Meantime the wife went to bed, leaving her husband to amuse himself with the wonderful hen.

In a little while the giant began to nod, his head grew heavy, his arm fell at his side, and he soon went off to sleep and snored like a great steam-engine.

Jack waited awhile until the snores grew longer and deeper, and then stole out softly from his hiding place, snatched up the hen from the table, jumped out of the window, which was a low one, and ran like an Indian to the spot where the bean-stalk reared its head through an opening in the ground.

Down the ladder he slid in a terrible hurry, for it seemed to him all the time as if the giant was close at his heels.

His mother was delighted to see him again; and oh, how happy she was when he showed her the hen which was to make them so rich they would never hunger any more!

For some time they lived at their ease; but Jack had an idea that he had not done all that the fairy meant he should do. So one day he told his mother that he must take a second trip up the bean-stalk. She begged him with tears in her eyes not to leave her and run the risk of falling into the giant's hands. But Jack was determined to go, and in a short time he made his appearance again at the giant's castle, where he begged for a night's lodging.

He had hard work to get in this time, for the giant's wife told Jack that not long ago she had let in a poor boy who stole her husband's favorite hen. The giant suspected that she was to blame for his great loss, and so gave her a severe scolding; and beat her till she was black and blue. So she told Jack he had better seek shelter elsewhere.

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But Jack begged so hard to be let in, and looked so innocent, that the kind-hearted woman opened the door, gave him a good supper, and hid him in the chest when it was time for the giant to come home.

This time the giant's supper consisted of salt pork, salted codfish, and a hundred or two great sausages; and the salt fare made him so thirsty that he drank three great casks of beer, when his usual custom was to drink but two.

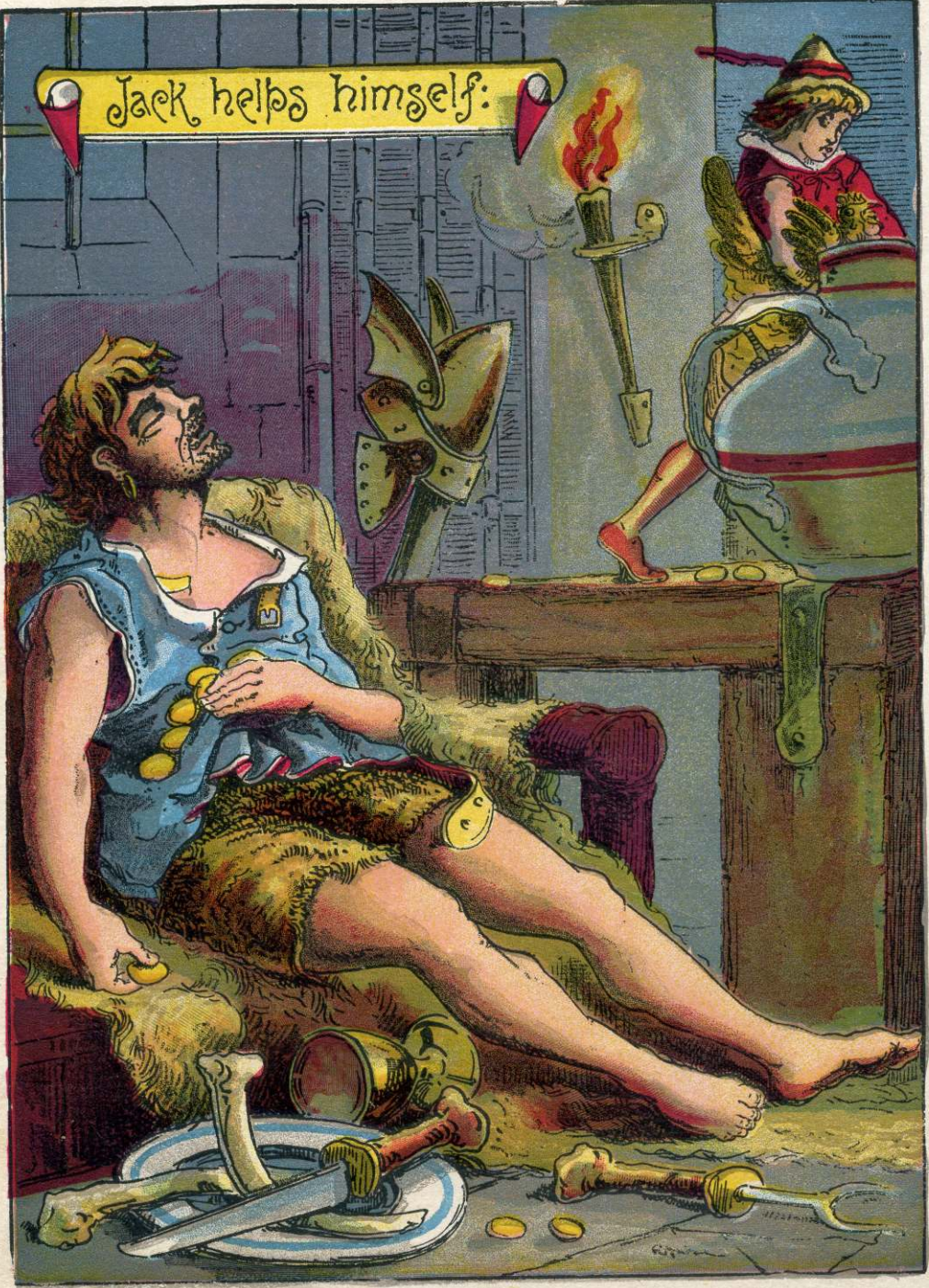
As soon as the feast was at an end, the giant roared out to his wife to bring him his money-bags that he might see how much he was worth, and they were brought and placed on the table before him. Instead of thanks, he gave her a rousing box on the ear, and sent her off to bed, where she was very glad to go.

The giant then began counting out the gold and silver in the bags and added to it that which he had stolen from some travelers that day, and there was so much of it that it tired him out, and being heavy with beer he soon fell asleep.

Jack waited to hear him snore, and then stole out of his hiding place on tiptoe, and clutched both of the money-bags. Just as he did so, a little dog belonging to the giant began to bark. Luckily Jack had not quite finished his supper when the giant knocked at the door; and he held in his hand a bone that he had taken with him to cheer his solitude. He threw the bone at the dog, who ceased to growl and bark, so that Jack got off with the money and was down the bean-stalk again before the giant woke up.

He found his mother quite ill, for she had been very uneasy about him; but to have him with her, safe and sound, was better than medicine, and she soon got well.

Jack helps himself:





Jack's last descent.

R. D. C.

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With the bags of gold the cottage was rebuilt, and for three years Jack and his mother lived happily together; but at the end of that time he began to be fretful and restless. He felt as if he must make one more visit to the giant's house, and one fine day away he went up the long ladder whose top was lost in the clouds.

This time he had harder work than ever to get into the giant's house; for the poor wife had had so many beatings because of the loss of the hen and the money-bags, that she was loth to open the door to strangers.

But at last Jack got in, and ate his supper, and hid himself as he had done twice before. When the giant came in, he roared out, "I smell fresh meat!" in such a way that it made Jack tremble; and the great man went searching round the room to find out where the tempting piece of flesh was hid.

But he was soon tired of this, and being very hungry sat down to enjoy the fine repast that his wife set out on the table. The bear went to his head, and put him in good humor, and he roared out to his wife to bring him his harp.

Now this harp was a wonderful instrument, for when it was set on the table it began to play of itself the most beautiful music that ever was heard. The harp now played softly and sweetly; and the giant, growing sleepy, lay at full length on the floor and began to snore loudly.

"Now," thought Jack, "is my time!" and he stole from his hiding-place on tiptoe and seized the harp. But the harp was enchanted, and as soon as Jack laid hands on it, it cried out in such a way that it woke the giant, who started up with a loud roar.

Jack kept tight hold of the harp, and fled from the house

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with the speed of the wind; and being young and spry reached the bean-stalk ahead of the giant, who was, however not far behind. Down the bean-stalk slid Jack, and as soon as he set foot on the ground, the heavy foot of the giant appeared at the top of the ladder.

Jack called loudly for an axe which his mother made haste to bring him. There was no time to lose. Jack gave the axe a swing and it came down with a thundering whack on the bean-stalk. The giant roared with rage. Another stroke of the axe and the bean-stalk shook and cracked, and the giant had to stop an instant to steady himself.

Whack! went the axe for the third time, and the great bean-stalk snapped in two, the giant lost his hold, and fell down to the ground where he lay crushed and dead.

Jack's mother came rushing out of the house at the noise and din, and found her son out of breath with the effort he had made to cut down the bean-stalk, and the giant lying dead a short distance from him. She bent over the great body to look at the face, and was astonished to find that it was the cruel monster who had murdered her husband, and robbed her of her wealth, and had now reaped the reward of his evil deeds.

Now that their enemy was dead Jack and his mother could live in peace and comfort, and when Jack reflected on his mother's sorrows and trials, he made up his mind that she should suffer no more on his account.

The bean-stalk withered away so that Jack was not tempted to climb it again, and he staid at home and took care of his mother, and they both lived happily together for a great many years.

