

The Romance of Jack O'Lantern.

FIRST FYTTE.

I.

GREATER churl was never known,
On this earth than stingy John ;
From his door the poor were turned,
Unrelieved, and cursed, and spurned.

II.

One night Jack was homeward coming,
Midnight, round his path was glooming ;
As he reached a river's side,
Some one near him, moaned and cried.

III.

"For the love of Heaven," he said,
"Mercy have, and lend me aid ;
Way-worn traveller am I,
Leave me here, and I shall die."

IV.

Stingy Jack's hard heart was touched ;
Quick the stranger he approached ;
Raised him up upon his mare ;
Brought him home, and fed him there.



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V.

Gray-haired wanderer down he lay,
But, before the break of day,
To the bed of Jack he hies,
Winged like zeraph of the skies.

VI.

Heavenly beauty graced his face;
Heavenly brightness filled the place;
When Jack, starting up, had woke,
Thus the angel smiling spoke.

VII.

“Though called a churl by all around,
Mercy in your heart I’ve found;
Ask three gifts, I’ll give them you,
And my blessing add thereto.”

VIII.

Greatly at all this Jack wondered;
Long, what he should ask, he pondered;
Scratched he often his shock head,
Then, thus, to the angel said.

IX.

“I wish whoever takes my chair,
May be fastened firmly there,
He to chair, and chair to ground,
Till my leave to go be found.

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X.

"Next I pray, whatever fools
Meddle with my box of tools,
May be fastened to the wall,
Till, to let them go, I call.

XI.

"Thirdly, sir, I would implore,
That, who breaks my sycamore,
May be fixed fast to the tree,
Till I choose to set him free."

XII.

"All these boons I grant to you,
And my blessing add thereto;"
Saying thus, the angel sighs,
As, from thence, to heaven, he flies;

XIII.

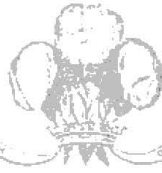
For when choice, like this, is given,
If the chooser ask not heaven,
Never more, by deeds or prayer,
Shall the spurner enter there.

XIV.

But, although thus doomed to hell,
Stingy Jack, on earth, throve well;
Large his flocks, and strong his health,
Wide his lands, and great his wealth.

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SECOND FYTTE.

I.

Now years have flown, and youth is gone,
And Jack's last day is come ;
And the Devil sends a servant up,
To fetch the old man home :
At Jack's hall door the servant knocks,
And bids him come away ;
Jack opes the door, and asks him in,
And says, " Sit down, I pray."

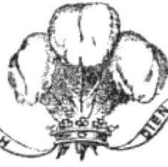
II.

In Jack's own seat, the servant sits,
And there is fastened tight ;
Jack takes his flail, and without fail,
He flogs him left and right :
And, as he scored, the flunkey roared,
At length he firmly swore,
That if set free, from thence he'd flee,
And never come back more.

III.

When thus he'd sworn, Jack set him free,
And off he went with speed ;
But many a servant, besides him,
The Devil has at need :





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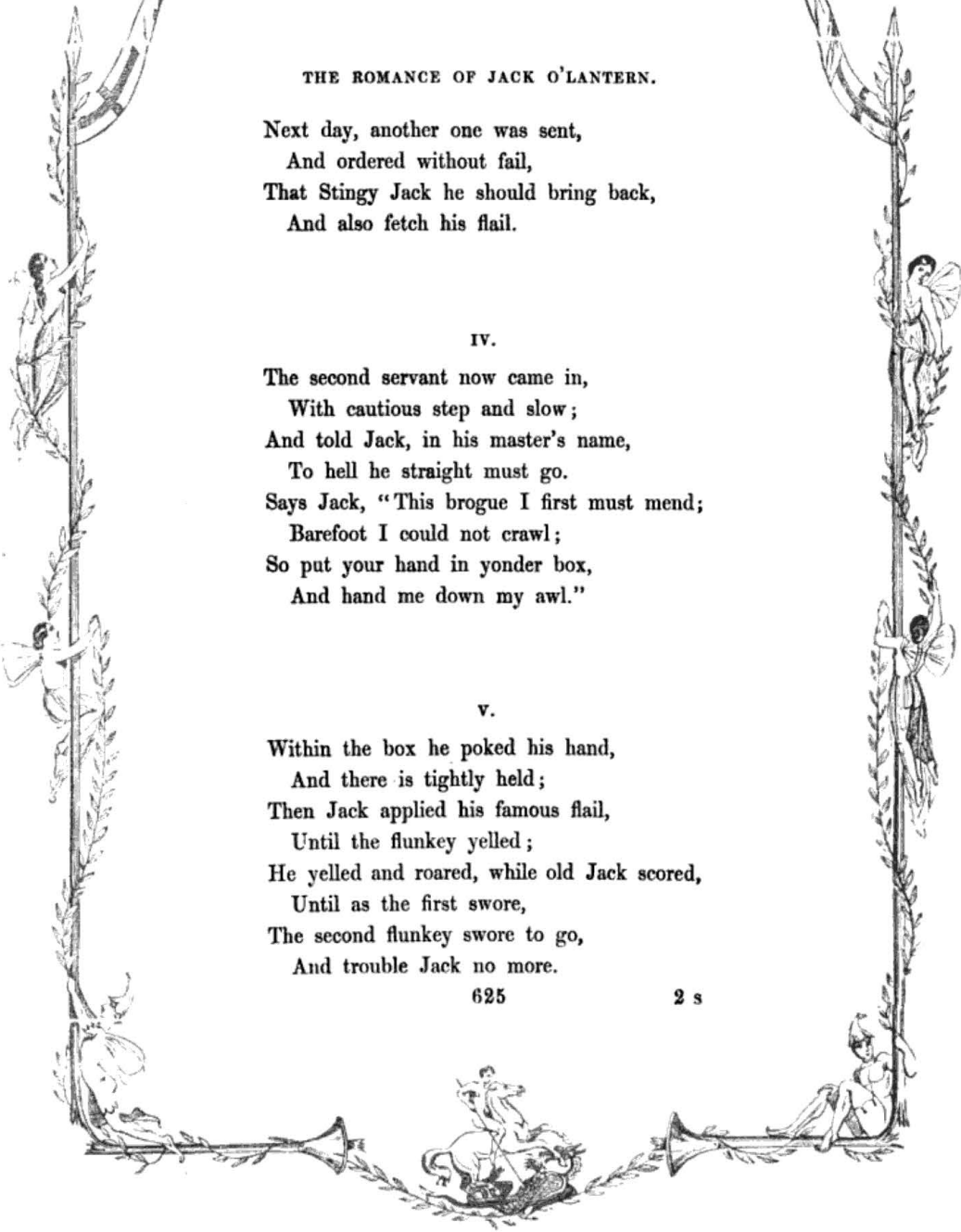
Next day, another one was sent,
And ordered without fail,
That Stingy Jack he should bring back,
And also fetch his flail.


IV.

The second servant now came in,
With cautious step and slow;
And told Jack, in his master's name,
To hell he straight must go.
Says Jack, "This brogue I first must mend;
Barefoot I could not crawl;
So put your hand in yonder box,
And hand me down my awl."

V.

Within the box he poked his hand,
And there is tightly held;
Then Jack applied his famous flail,
Until the flunkey yelled;
He yelled and roared, while old Jack scored,
Until as the first swore,
The second flunkey swore to go,
And trouble Jack no more.





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VI.

And now the Devil came himself,
Since servants would not do ;
Through Mangerton, he rose in flame,
And ordered Jack to go.
Said Jack, " My Lord, I'm ready quite,
But dead lame is old Jack ;
You must get me a good stout stick,
Or take me on your back."

VII.

Then from the Sycamore hard by,
The Devil seized a bough ;
And fastened tight, and helpless quite,
The Devil is left now :
Jack yelled with joy, when the old boy
He saw thus in his power ;
Then hastened for his famous flail,
And laid it on galore.

VIII.

So loudly howled the Devil then,
His roars were heard quite plain,
In Germany, and Italy,
And even in far Spain :
Upon his back, three flails broke Jack,
And still he lathered on ;
Nor did he stay his work that day,
Until the setting sun.



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IX.

Then, by his horns, the Devil swore,
That if Jack let him go,
He'd never bring, nor let Jack come,
Within his realms below :
When thus he'd sworn, with back well torn,
Jack sets the Devil free ;
And from that day, he staid away,
From Jack and from his tree.

X.

At length Jack died, and when his soul
Was from his body riven ;
It could not get through hell's wide gates,
Nor yet through those of heaven :
By his free choice, he lost the last ;
And Satan did not fail
His oath to keep, and Jack to sweep,
From hell's gates, with his flail.

XI.

Then since Jack is unfit for heaven,
And hell won't give him room,
His ghost is forced to walk the earth,
Until the day of doom :
A lantern in his hand he bears,
The way by night to show ;
And, from its flame, he's got the name
Of Jack O' Lantern now.