

THE

HISTORY

OF

JACK OF NEWBURY,

CALLED, THE

CLOTHIER

OF ENGLAND.

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STIRLING:

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T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F

*JACK OF NEWBURY.*

**I**N the reign of King Henry VIII. one John Winchcomb was a rich clothier in the town of Newbury in Berkshire; a handsome and clever youth; when his master died, and left his mistress a widow, who seeing John to be a careful servant, put him in great trust in her house, which he carefully performed.

His mistress soon had many suitors, but could not fancy any; for her man John had stolen her heart.

The parson of Speenham-land was one of her amorous suitors, and often solicited her to be his wife, but could not obtain her love, because he was a clergyman too much devoted to his study.

A rich tanner was her second wooer, but he could not speed though he was rich, for he was too old for her young and lusty desires.

A taylor was the third, who was almost confident of her love, but was mistaken; for John was the man who had so wounded her heart, that she could love no other man.

She seeing the backwardness of her man John, after many occasions offered him to woo her, came at last and told him plainly that she loved him dearly, which secret she desired him not to impart unto any one, but he modestly blushing with a rosy color in his cheeks, not knowing how to express himself according to his own wishes, being much surprized thereat, answered, Sweet mistress, it is a charge whereof, methinks, I fear to undertake

At which answer she was much discouraged in her suit for the present, and kissing him most lovingly, she broke off the discourse for that time. And night approaching, she went to bed, but had very small rest, either slumbering at the best, for dreaming of her handsome man

John; fetching many deep sighs in the  
 dark and lonesome nights; thinking it  
 very long before morning came, rejoicing  
 to see the light appear, that she might  
 embrace her dear servant, or rather her  
 master John.

She going to see Bartholomew fair, as  
 women are used more to see and be seen,  
 took her man John with her, who while  
 he was talking with a friend, she saw him  
 saluting a handsome girl, which made her  
 swallow her own mouth water; but biting her lips, she  
 left discoursing with her neighbour, and  
 went to John, to prevent his having any  
 more familiarity with the maid.



Afterwards she met the taylor, her old  
 sweetheart, as near as could be, in the  
 fair, who desiring her to accept of a glass

of wine with him, was denied again and again; but by importunity she was persuaded. And he espying the tanner, called him in to help bear the charges and not imagining he was a suitor to the same widow. And both of them espying the parson, called him in, expecting to make him their solicitor. So they were all merrily drawn into Cupid's paradise. But when each had discovered his intentions to the others, they were all exceedingly perplexed, not knowing how this division might end.

At last it was desired of her to declare which of them she liked best, and she answered. That she loved them alike and thanked them for their charges.



Then quoth the Parson, can you find in your heart to marry me?]

No, quoth she, it is your office to marry, not mine.

Then quoth the Tanner, will you make me your husband? Truly neighbour, said she, methinks you might better be my father; you are one of too great years to marry such a young and brisk widow as I am.

Then quoth the Taylor, widow, it is I that must enjoy you; shall you and I be married? Yes, I hope so, quoth the widow, when we and our sweethearts are agreed.

After this she desired to take her leave of them, thanking them for the costs they had been at for her, and then rose up to go away; but they desired a full answer from her, that they might be better satisfied in their requests. Accordingly she promised to give them full satisfaction the next Thursday. At which time they all attended and then she told them plainly, that she would marry none of them, for that she had one nearer home, whom she loved to that degree, that she could not think of marrying any other man. So they all went away discontented.

Night approaching she talked privately with her man John, wooing him to wed her, which he still, through bashfulness, refused; and when night drew on, she caused an extraordinary bed to be made up for her man John to be in, which bed was only for strangers to lie in, or for her husband when he was not well; and she herself lay in the next chamber.

When she had lain in bed an hour or two, she thought she had lain alone long enough. So she arose and went to her man John, shivering and shaking, and lifting up the bed cloaths, he started. Who is there? quoth he. It is I, my sweet John, said she, it is an exceeding cold night, and I lying alone, am almost starved in my bed; good John afford me the favor of one night's lodging by thy side, my John I pray thee. Alas! my poor mistress, quoth he, come lie close. Yea, yea, quoth she. O sweet, loving, and dear John—Here it will be proper to leave them till morning.

She got up early in the morning, and calling for her man John to go out with her, she took him to the Church of St. Bartholomew and called for the priest of



the parish, and with him persuaded John that they might then be married together which with some small intreaty, he consented to; and so they went home, and going to dinner, she made him sit in her old husband's chair, at which the servants began to smile at each other; as guessing at the reason. But before dinner was over she took him round the neck and kissed him, saying, That he was her husband, and ordered them to shew him the respect due to a master.



He also spoke lovingly to them, and told them that he would not forget that he had once been their fellow servant; but would deserve their respects to the utmost of his endeavours. The remainder of the day was spent in love toys, except

some little time in overlooking the journeymen.

The next morning the new married bride was visited by divers goffips of her acquaintance, who each of them spent their verdict what the event of this her hasty marriage would be; which exceedingly discouraged her; however, at last she said, I will take care and order that I will so curb him at first, that I will make sure he shall never crow over me in the least, I warrant you.

And indeed she began to grow as great a goffip as any in Newbury, and would sometimes come home very late at night, infomuch that once her husband John went up to bed and locked her out, and took the key up into his chamber. And when the good wife found she was locked out, she knocked very hard, till at last her husband looked out of the window, and told her to look out her lodging that night at the place she had been sitting all day. Such goffips as you, says he, the cage is he fittest lodging for. Go directly to the constable and bespeak you a bed of him. O dear husband, quoth she, be not so angry; I pray you give me leave to come

to my bed, good sweet husband, confide  
it is night and I pray you let me not stand  
thus long in the cold, lest I lose my life  
thereby.

After many fine words wherein she in-  
treated her husband to come down and  
open the door, he came down to her, &  
let her in; to whom she very dissem-  
blingly pretended to have lost her fine  
wedding ring off her finger. He lovingly  
going forth with the candle in his hand  
in his shirt, looked up and down upon  
the ground for it; and she in the mean  
time stepped in and clapped too the door,  
and shut him out; whereat he was much  
perplexed, and he stood knocking a long  
time in the cold before she would answer  
who at the opening of the window, bid  
him go look for a lodging with the con-  
stable's wife, and asked him, whether he  
thought it good to lie in the cold street?  
Now, quoth she, she who was even now  
at your mercy, hath gotten you at her's  
O, sweet wife, said he, be not angry, but  
let me come in, I swear unto you, that I  
never will shut you out of doors again;  
but you shall do what you will; and I

will never meddle nor make with you hereafter.

Upon which she came down and opened the door, and let him in, and then they made great protestations to each other, never to affront or to fall out with each other any more for the future: and so with a good sack posset the covenant was agreed on between them.

Shortly after the King had occasion to raise an army against the Scots, who were risen against the English, Jack of Newbury raised at his own expence, one hundred and fifty men, cloathed them in white coats, red caps, and yellow feathers and led them himself.

Fifty of them were valiant horsemen, fifty pikemen, and fifty musqueteers; all brave steeds, good arms and valiant men who marching before the Queen, she called for him, and understanding what he was, she put forth her hand for him to kiss, and promised to acquaint the King of his free and great services.

A SONG.

# A S O N G,

USED BY

Jack of Newbury, and his  
Soldiers.

**K**ING Jemmy of Scots has rais'd  
An army against England,  
But let him come we'll thunder him  
back,

He cannot us withstand.

Jack of Newbury comes, proud Scots  
take heed,

With valiant soldiers stout,

Who for brave England will fight with  
you,

And never will give out.

Our milk white coats, red caps,

And yellow feathers declare,

Our resolutions stout and good,

The Scots we will not spare.

Shortly after, John of Newbury heard  
that the King, was to ride to Newbury;

so he and his servants went out into the open fields, and finding a field of pismires he drew his sword and guarded it.

The King coming by, sent for him to know the reason why he guarded that place with his sword drawn, the King in person being to pass by there? He immediately returned for answer, That he was busy, and could not speak with him, and as the King is on horseback, and I am on foot; he may the better come to me: tell the King that I stand here to guard these laborious ants from their enemies.

Which message being carried to the King, he went to Jack of Newbury, expecting that it was done to make some jest for his pleasure; and when the King came, Jack with all his men fell upon their knees, and cried, God save the King! for your sacred Majesty, quoth Jack of Newbury, hath vanquished all your enemies. Now trust me quoth the King, you are stout soldiers to fight against butterflies, and so manfully to withstand such mighty giants

My dread Sovereign, quoth Jack of Newbury, not long ago, in my conceit I saw the most provident nation of ants

Summon their chief peers to parliament which was held in the famous city of Drudistle, the 21st of December last, whereat by their wisdom, I was chosen King. At which time also many bills of complaint were brouht against a great many members in the Common-Wealth amongst whom the mule was arraigned



for high-treason against the state, and therefore he was banished for ever from the antient kingdom. So were also the grasshopper and the caterpillar, because

they were not only idle themselves, but also lived upon the labour of others,

Amongst the rest, the butterfly was much disliked, but few durst say any thing to him, because of his golden apparel who, though himself upon sufferance grew so very ambitious and malepert that the poor ant could no sooner get an egg into her nest, but he would have it away, especially against Easter; which at length much offended them all. This painted ass took snuff in the note, & assembled a great many of his own coat and went to war to root those painful people out of the land, that he might himself be above them.

These were proud butterflies indeed said our noble King.

Whereupon I, with my men, quoth Jack, prepared ourselves to withstand them, until such time as your Majesty's royal presence put them to flight.



The Song that Jack sung with his Men  
before the King.

[ HAVE now taken upon me a charge  
 To govern these poor ants,  
 That they may walk at large,  
 And gather in their wants.  
 That they may walk more safe,  
 To bring home their relief,  
 And keep that which they have,  
 From every idle thief.  
 But now my king is here,  
 bow down on my knee,  
 For we that vaunted here,  
 Are subjects unto thee.  
 God blefs thee royal king,  
 And fend thee long to reign,  
 And joy in everything,  
 And freedom from all pain.  
 And my men, and mine,  
 My ants and all we have,  
 Command us, we are thine,  
 and so the King God save.

Now to return again to Jack and his wife. It happened that she fell sick and died; and soon after her burial Jack fell in love with one of his maids, and sent for her father to know what he would give with his daughter. He came to Newbury, and seeing the great wealth of his daughter and sweetheart, he was exceedingly astonished, so Jack had

In one room two hundred looms all going.

Two hundred boys winding quills.

An hundred women carding.

In another room two hundred maids spinning.

One hundred and fifty boys picking of wool.

Fifty shearmen.

Eight toers.

Forty dyers in the dye-house.

Twenty men in a fulling mill.

In his own house he kept a butcher, a baker, a brewer, five cooks, and six scullions.

He spent every week five fat oxen in his house, besides butter, cheese, fish, &c.

Zir, quoth the old man, I wize you be abominable rich, and cham content you

should have my daughter, and God's blessing and mine light on you both. I waith cham of good exclamashon amongst all my neighbours, and they will as zoon ask my vize for any thing. Zo thick I will agree. You shall have her with a very good will, because we hear a very good commendation of you in every place, therefore besides think I will give twenty marks and a weaping calf that is a year old, and when I and my wife die, then you shall have the revolution of our goods.



But Jack made more reckoning of his wife's modesty and virtue, than the father's proffers; to be married her, and made a sumptuous wedding; and instead of accepting the old man's twenty marks,

he gave him twenty pounds in money, besides other gifts.

O my good zun, said the old man, God's blessing be wi' you mun; for to tell you the truth, we have zold all our kine for to make up the money for our dear daughters marriage, and these zeven years we should not have been able to



buy any more. Notwithstanding we should have zold all that ever we had before my poor wench should have lost her marriage; nay, I should have zold my coat from my hack and my bed from under me, before my daughter should have gone without you.

I thank you, good father and mother, said the bride, and God keep you in good health. Then the bride kneeled down

and did her duty, and her father and another wept for joy, and so departed.

Now there was one Randal Pert, a draper, dwelling in Watling-street, who owed to Jack of Newbury five hundred pounds: and it happened that Jack came to London, and as he was going to his customers, he met in the street this poor Randal Pert in a frock, carrying a porters basket, with scarce a coat, waistcoat, breeches, or hat on; a rope round his middle, and was just then come out of prison.

His wife, who before for daintiness would not foul her fingers, nor turn her head aside for fear of rumpling her neck-inger; yet she was now glad to wash cloaths at the Thames side, and to be a hairwoman.

Her soft hand was hardned with scowring, and instead of gold rings on her white fingers, her hands and fingers were now filled with chaps.

But when her husband espied Jack of Newbury, his creditor he ran away as fast as he could, for fear of being again arrested. But Jack sent his man after him and he seeing one pursue him, ran the

faster and in running he left one of his old flippers here and another there, ever looking behind him with great fear. At last, his breeches being tied with one point, what with the haste he made, and the oldness thereof they broke, and fell about his heels, and so fettered him, that he fell down in the street, with his back side bare, and an old ragged sbirt, and lay sweating and blowing, quite open and out, The fellow came to him, and brought him to his master, who took him to a scrivener, to give him a bond for the payment of the money; and the time for payment was fixed to be when the said Pert was sheriff of London, and was withstood by.

Then Jack of Newbury sent for a new suit of apparel for him out of Birching Lane, and a new shirt and band hat, hose shoes, and all things necessary for a merchant, Then he took for him a shop in Canwick street, and furnished it with thousand pounds worth of good cloth, by which means, and other favours he did him, he grew in good credit again, and was very provident; and his wife grew

one of the best housewives in the parish, and he soon got good custom.

He increased much in store, and in a short time become of much repute in the parish, and so well respected, that he was chosen sheriff of London, died before he come to be Lord Mayor, and left his wife very rich.

Jack of Newbury, otherwise called Mr. John Winchcomb, being grown old; fell sick, and in a few days died, and his wife buried him with great pomp.

He left his wife a great estate, and many legacies to friends and poor relations.

And the greatest part of all the country people thereabouts came to see the old man laid in the grave where we will leave him, with this epitaph:

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His EPITAPH.

**O**F Newbury here lies valiant Jack,  
Shrouded in white, come to his end,  
By death, that now has broke his back  
Who to his country was a friend.

An aid to these who labour lov'd,  
An aid to the poor, blind, and lame,  
Men, women, children, all have prov'd  
The succour sweet that from him came

Winchcomb adieu, God hath thy soul,  
Thy body lies entomb'd in earth,  
Thy works brave histories do enrol,  
Thy life the same, e'en from thy birth.

F I N I S.