

## Literature, &amp;c.

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JACQUES COCAST,  
THE HUNCHBACK PHILOSOPHER.

By Douglas Jerrold.

"THANK God for my haunch!" cried Jacques Cocast, then eleven years old, escaped from the pitying hands of Martin Flean the miller, who casting a compassionate glance at Cocast's unseemly load, exclaimed,

"Well, the saints have burdened thee enough—go, I would'nt beat a haunch-back."

"Thank God for my haunch!" were the grateful words of the apple-stealing Jacques, and he followed his lighter heeled companions, who, on the first alarm, had scampered away from the millers orchard, leaving their deformed co-mate to the vengeance of the despoiled. The miller, as we have shown before, was merciful, and Jacques Cocast, the hunchback, went his way unbruised.

Jacques Cocast grew up, the living plaything of the boys of the village. He was their drudge, their jest, and their scapegoat. His good humor turned bitterness itself to merriment, and with at times the tears starting in his eyes, he would laugh them down, and without knowing it, play the practical philosopher.

"Out ye imp of deformity!" cried his stepmother at least once a day; whereupon Jacques, to the increasing ire of his father's wife, would meekly cry,

"Thank God for my haunch."

Left to himself, now spurned, and now at least endured by his growing companions, Jacques Cocast made a friend of his book, and found the exceeding reward of such friendship. He could read, write, and cypher to the shame of many of his seniors. Jacques Cocast's father took sudden pride in his own misshapen flesh, and Cocast's wife stormed at her stepson with increasing vigor.

The notary wanted a clerk. All eyes were turned upon Jacques as the very lad for the office. The notary himself condescended to canvass the pretensions of Jacques to the dignity. Already Jacques felt himself installed, when a slim, fair haired, pink complexioned youth was preferred to Cocast, the notary's wife having pithily informed her obedient husband, that his house should be no dwelling place for a hunchback.

Jacques Cocast sighed as he turned from the notary's door, and his heart beat heavily as he crawled to his paternal home. In two or three days, however, the hunchback smiled and laughed as before, and the clerkship was forgotten in sweet communings with his book.

Some four years passed on,—when oh, shame to the notary's wife—shame to the fair haired youth—the faultless woman fled from the bosom of her husband, taking with her in her flight her husband's clerk! Great was the consternation throughout the village—loud and deep the revilings of every honest spouse. Jacques Cocast joined in no abuse; but with a fine charity for the experience of youth, with even a tenderness towards the sin of the unfaithful wife, and considering within himself the subtle powers of the tempter, he felt grateful for his escape, and breathed his gratitude in his wonted syllables.

Jacques Cocast was now a painstaking, philosophic tailor; and from no higher elevation than his shopboard, could look down on many of the vanities of human life. He was now twenty, and increasing years had only served to mellow his rich heart, and make him feel a lessening load upon his shoulders. Jacques would make one at all village holidays led thereto by his own light heartedness, and of late, furthermore urged to each festival by the blue eyes of Felicite, the baker's daughter.

Luckless Jacques Cocast! Fly the sweet perdition! You know not the falsehood of those azure lights—the venom of that pouting, pulpy lip; Felicite laughs with a witch's laugh at the love of the hunchback—whilst he, poor innocent—exalted, sublimated, by his passion lives in an atmosphere of balm and sun, vaults, like a grasshopper about the earth, and gives his heart and soul to the tyranny that rejoices him. Jacques Cocast knew not vanity. He would clothe himself in the humblest weed, and the best wardrobe which drew to itself the least notice. Now it was otherwise. The eyes of Felicite had smiled upon the tailor, and Jacques Cocast should henceforth be the best and the most critical customer to Jac-

ques Cocast. If Felicite had looked with favor on his body, he would take the hitherto despised article under his future care, and habit it worthy of her who had elicited it as her own, as for his hump, that was gone, yea, vanished, melted in the sunlight of Felicite's eyes. With these rejoicing thoughts Jacques Cocast would array himself finely as the finest caterpillar; his vestments now barred, and spotted, and burnished with a hundred hues. And as he basked in the smiles of Felicite the baker's wicked daughter would laugh in her hollow heart, and the folks of the village would confidentially clap their fingers to their noses, and wink towards the tailor.

For a month or more was Jacques Cocast the blissful Adam of this fool's paradise. For a full month did he breathe Elysium. At length the eyes of Jacques Cocast were opened and he saw his forlornness. It was the day of a *ducasse*. In the pride of his heart, and in all the glory of his trade, did the hunchback array himself to dance with Felicite, the baker's daughter. She had of late been so loving, so complying so tender! The next dance might be at their own wedding. At all events how they would dance on the next Sunday. He, the hunchback buoyed by his loving heart, would foot it so lightly that not a blade of grass should bend beneath him—not a dew drop be scattered by his mercurial toe.

The dancers are assembled. The fiddles sound. Jacques Cocast in all the glory of a new suit, burning like a peacock in a conflict of colors, and in the triumph of a gladdened soul, advances to lead out Felicite the baker's daughter. Already he had his hand upon her hand, when a gigantic thumb and finger with vice like power gripes the nose of Jacques Cocast and whirls him from his partner. A laugh that drowns the fiddles bursts from the merry-makers. Jacques Cocast, with lightning in his eyes, and all the blood in his body rushing to his nose, looks for his assailant.

Foolish Jacques Cocast! Who would pity the despair of a hunchback? Who compassionate a love broken heart, if accompanied by over-laden shoulders? What is a beautiful sentiment with a straight backed, comely man, is a thing for a jest, an excellent joke with a hunchback. And so Jacques Cocast, go home. Sleep not in the fields at nights. Lie not under the window of the baker's daughter, and waste not away until, as you complain, your head has grown to little for your hat—but up man, and to your comfortable abode. Shave yourself, change your linen, leap upon your shop board, thread your needle, heat your goose, and defy love. A friendly Genius whispered some such advice to Jacques Cocast, for ere a month had passed, the tailor had once more taken to his sober attire, was seated smiling at his work, and if a thought of the cruel baker's daughter would sometimes intrude, he would banish the unwelcome guest by the vehemence of stitching.

Months passed away, and the time of drawing for the conscription arrived. Mothers looked anxious—plighted maidens would sigh frequently and look with tender gaze upon their future husband—the young men would laugh, laugh louder than was their wont to bush the secret care that preyed upon them. But what was the conscription, with the banishment, the danger, the wounds and death combined in the word to Jacques Cocast. He was a hunchback. His shoulders were exempt by nature from a knapsack.—He was not a comely morsel for glory; he was not worthy of the powder and shot bestowed upon prettier men. No, he was secure in his deformity, his heart started not at the muttering of the beaten sheepskin. Hence Jacques Cocast without one throb, save for the fate of some old acquaintance, might linger about the town hall of the arrondissement, and learn the fortune of his fellow villagers.

The day of drawing came. There was the shriek of triumph as one sprang into his mother's arms—as his sister clung about his neck—as his plighted wife, and now their wedding day was certain—there were bursts of joy and tears of happiness as the exempt sprang among the crowd; and there were cries of despair, and sobbings as among breaking hearts as the near conscripts told the fate that tore them from their homes.

"Thank God for my haunch!" cried Jacques Cocast, twenty times as he saw the wretchedness of the conscript soldier.

Among those drawn to wear future laurels was Hercule Grossetete. He looked savage as a snarled ogre; and the baker's beautiful daughter hang on his arm, and was crying her heart out, and

vowing between her sobs, that for the sake of her dear Hercule, she would try to live and die a maid; and Hercule with his fancy listening to the whistling bullets, smiled vacantly on the magnanimity of Felicite, and bade Heaven help her in all her trials.

And did the heart of Jacques Cocast rejoice at this? By no means—he felt no triumph at the calamity of Grossetete—no pleasure at the grief of his fair, false baker's daughter; but with a gush of gratitude, he exclaimed,

"Thank God for my haunch!"

Hercule Grossetete went to the wars. Fortune that had heaped such obliquely upon the shoulders of Cocast, had fitted Grossetete for the dignity of a grenadier. He quitted the village, left the baker's daughter, and was soon marching and perhaps, day dreaming of pillage and epaulettes. We know not what struggles Felicite endured to keep her pledge to Hercule; they must have been severe and manifold; for it was at least six months after the departure of her grenadier that she wedded the son of the village grocer, the grocer's father opportunely dying and leaving his stock and business to his only son.

All the world—that is all the village—believed in the conjugal bliss of the grocer and his wife. Pierre Chandelles was so meek, so gentle a soul, any woman must be happy with him.

Again, Felicite was always the sweetest tempered girl: there had been curious tales of her sudden passion, but such tales had been trumpeted up by the ugliest girls of the village.

Three months had passed since Pierre and Felicite were one; and Jacques Cocast—for in the magnanimity of his soul he did not withdraw his custom from Pierre on account of his wife; besides Pierre's was the only shop in the village—modestly tapped a sou on Pierre's counter, it being the intention of the tailor to dispense that coin in bees-wax. Suddenly there was a noise within; Jacques recognized the voice of Felicite, albeit he had never before heard it at so high a pitch. Another minute, and Pierre rushes into the shop followed by his wife, who, heedless of the cries of her husband, demolished an earthen pipkin unluckily in her hands upon her lord and sovereign's head. No sheep ever bleated with more meekness than did Pierre Chandelles the grocer.

"What did you want?" asked Pierre with still a vigilant eye to business.

"I'll call again when your wounds are dressed," said Jacques Cocast, "in the meantime, thank God for my haunch!"

Years went on, and Jacques Cocast gathered about him the small comfort of the world, and keeping the spirit of his youth, was blithe as a bird.

One autumn morning, wandering a mile or two on the road from the village, and thinking he knew not upon what, Jacques Cocast was suddenly startled from his reflections by a loud voice.

For the love of the saints, if you have it, give me a pinch of snuff."

The prayer proceeded from a blind soldier, seated on a tree felled near the roadside.

"With all my heart," cried Cocast.

"Here, empty my box."

"Alas, good sir!" said the soldier,

"look at me again."

Cocast looked and saw that the man had lost both his arms.

"You must, indeed, give me the snuff," said the soldier.

"With all my heart, I say again," cried Cocast, with the most delicate care he supplied the nostrils of the mutilated veteran.

"Good Heavens!" suddenly exclaimed Cocast, "why you are Hercule Grossetete."

"I am," answered the soldier. "And what have you to say to that?"

"What! Jacques Cocast looking at the eyeless, armless victim of glory, could only say,

"Thank God for my haunch!"

Almost all men have a haunch of some kind. Let them, with Jacques Cocast, thank God for it.

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CHANGE OF CLIMATE AND  
EVENTS.

It is evident that at some remote period of time a great change took place in the climate of various portions of our earth. Vegetation the growth of tropical climates, is found in Northern climates, embedded in strati of earth in such positions as to leave no doubt that it was at one time the natural product of the soil where it now remains buried.

The fossil remains of the Crocodile, and of the Mammoth, are found in every quarter of the globe. In the frozen regions of Siberia, the bones of huge

animals are found so abundantly that vessels are sent thither from Russia, which bring away entire cargoes; and these bones have become quite an article of commerce.

In 1799 a carcass of a huge animal was discovered in the immense ice cliffs at the mouth of one of the large rivers in the Northern part of Siberia. As the ice melted, more and more of the immense carcass became visible, until at length it was all disengaged, and fell down upon the sand of the Sea Shore, where the White Bears fed upon it for a long time, and the Jubats cut off the flesh and fed it to their dogs. Mr Adams visited the spot in 1836 and gathered up a large quantity of the hair and bristles, and as much of the skin as required two men to lift it. This animal's carcass must have been reposing in its bed ever since the great deluge, when the frost chrysalized a portion of the waters.

The large bones which are found in various places, are embedded in different kinds of earth, many of them in a stiff blue clay, others in the Carbonate of lime, which has chrysalized around them.

It is pretty clear that if these immensely large animals had died in this climate, as it now is, putrefication and decomposition would have destroyed both the flesh and bones together.

In some sections of the South American continent animal flesh will not putrify or decompose by being exposed on the surface of the earth, but on the contrary, it becomes dry and hard. Heat and moisture must both be present at the same time, to produce animal or vegetable putrefaction, or decomposition.

An animal frame thrown by the waters of the universal deluge into the Arctic region, where perpetual frost has ever since reigned, would not have undergone any change, and melted ice would leave it in the state in which the frost overtook it.

That these Monster Beasts must have all been swept from among the living by the Deluge, seems certain; and that when the waters subsided, they were buried beneath the earthly matter that was precipitated from the body of the vasty deep, seems evident from the state of the soil in which the bones are found imbedded. Many scientific men are of opinion that the poles of our earth have changed; and such an event may have been produced by the great deluge, as both the Arctic and Antarctic poles must have been extensively affected, and their icy mountains melted and made greatly to swell the mighty flood.

The whole face of our earth bears the marks of the currents of the great Deluge, and every thing we meet with in the earth's strata, confirms the accuracy of the account given of that memorable event by the sacred historian.

The motion of our planet would be effected by a universal flood of waters; and also by a universal conflagration; the former event is most positively asserted in the sacred volume as having already taken place, and the latter is as sure to happen.

When this terrestrial Globe shall have kindled up its mighty blaze and become melted with fervent heat, then will its atmosphere be expanded, and the Earth be thereby removed from its present orbit, and passing with inconceivable velocity toward the solar orb of our system, until it shall have reached sufficiently near that body to be repulsed by its motion, will be thrown off into vast space with a force so great as to give length and eccentricity to its orbit equal to the distance of its present position from the sun, until it shall have spent the force of its repulsion, and again return with a blaze of light and fire to its train, which shall continue until the number of its revolutions shall be sufficiently great to afford it time to again acquire density, and again to be clothed with matter, and again to resume its place, and move in its former orbit as a new creation.

Such events are not inconsistent with the declarations of the sacred volume. Astronomers agree in opinion that several stars have disappeared from our system within the last two hundred years, and one of them asserts that one of the stars was seen to be in a state of combustion for more than sixteen months, and finally disappeared.

The comets which occasionally become visible to the inhabitants of the earth, may at some future period include our earth among their number; and although their revolutions consume what seems to us to be ages of time, still these revolutions had a beginning; but the end is not within the compass of a finite