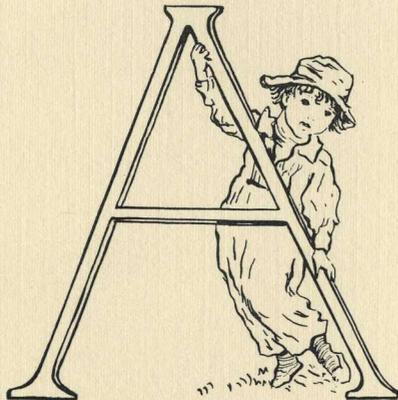


THE
HISTORY
OF
TOM THUMB.



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TOM THUMB.



A MAGICIAN, in disguise, was going a journey, and being very weary, he stopped one day at the cottage of an honest ploughman to refresh himself. The ploughman's wife was very civil to him, and brought him some milk in a wooden bowl, and some brown bread on a platter.

Merlin could not help noticing, that though every thing in the cottage was neat and in good order, the ploughman and his wife seemed very much grieved about something; so he asked them the reason of this, and they told him that they could not make themselves happy because they had no children. The poor woman said, with tears in her eyes, that she should be as happy as any body in the world, if she had a son, even if he were no bigger than his father's thumb.

Merlin was very much pleased with the thought of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb; and as soon as he got home he sent for the queen of the fairies, for he was a great friend of her's, and told her how the ploughman and his wife longed to have a son the size of his father's thumb.

The queen of the fairies liked the plan very much, and said their wish should soon be granted; and so indeed it was, for sometime after this the ploughman's wife had a son just of that size.



Tom never was any bigger than his father's thumb, which was not a large thumb neither, but as he grew older, he became very cunning and sly, which his mother did not correct him enough for; so that when he was old enough to play with the boys for cherry-stones, and had lost all his own, he used to creep into the other boys' bags, fill his pockets, and come out again to play. But one day, as he was getting out of a bag of cherry-stones, the boy who owned it chanced to see him. "Aha, my little Tom Thumb!" said the boy, "have I caught you at your bad tricks at last?"

Now I will punish you for thieving." Then he drew the string tight round his neck, and shook the bag a good deal, so that the cherry-stones bruised Tom's legs, thighs, and body sadly. This made him beg to be let out, and promise never to play such tricks any more.

Tom Thumb's mother once took him with her when she went to milk the cow; and as it was a very windy day she tied him to a thistle, with a piece of thread, that he might not be blown away. The cow saw Tom's oak-leaf hat, and



liked it so much that she took him and the thistle up at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle, Tom was afraid of her great teeth, which seemed ready to crush him to pieces, so he roared out, "Mother, mother!" as loud as he could. "Where are you, Tommy, my dear Tommy?" said his mother. "Here, mother, (said Tom) here, in the red cow's mouth." His mother now began to cry and wring her hands; but when the cow found such odd noises in her throat, she opened her mouth, and let Tom drop out.

Tom's father made him a whip of barley-straw to drive the cattle with, and when Tom was in the field one day, he slipped into a deep furrow. A raven picked him up with a grain of corn, and flew with him to the top of a giant's castle by the seaside, where he left him, and old Grumbo, the giant, coming soon after to walk upon his terrace, took up Tom, and swallowed him like a pill, clothes and all. Tom soon made the giant very ill, so that he threw him up again into the sea. A great fish then swallowed him; and this



fish was soon after caught, and sent as a present to King Arthur. When it was cut open, every body was charmed with little Tom. The king made him his dwarf; he was the favourite of the whole court; and by his merry tricks he often amused the queen, and the knights of the round table.

Tom got a little purse, and put a silver threepence into it. He had much ado to lift this upon his back; he then set out, and after walking two days and two nights, he came safe to his father's house. His mother met him at the door,

almost tired to death; for in the forty-eight hours he had walked almost half a mile with the silver threepence upon his back, which was a very heavy load for him to carry. His parents were glad to see him, and the more so because he had brought such a sum of money along with him. They placed him in a walnut shell by the fireside, and feasted him for three days on a hazel nut; but this made him sick, for a whole nut used always to last him a month.



Tom soon got well; but he could not travel back again, because it had rained; so his mother took him in her hand, and with one puff of her mouth, she blew him into King Arthur's court. Tom now amused the king and queen, and lords of the court, at many warlike games; and he was so eager to please them in this way, that he brought a fit of sickness on himself, and his life was considered to be in great danger.

Just at this time, the queen of the fairies came to see him in a chariot drawn by flying mice. She placed Tom by her

side, and drove through the air without stopping till they came to her palace. Here she restored him to health, and let him enjoy the gay pleasures of Fairy Land for some time. She then made a fair wind to blow, and placing Tom before it, she blew him straight to the court of King Arthur. But just as Tom should have come down in the court-yard of the palace, the cook happened to pass along with the king's great bowl of furmenty, (for King Arthur loved furmenty,) and poor Tom Thumb fell plump into the middle of it, and splashed the hot furmenty into the cook's eyes.



Down went the bowl. "Oh dear! oh dear!" cried Tom. "Murder, murder!" roared the cook. And away ran all the king's nice furmenty into the channel.

The cook was a red-faced cross fellow, and told the king he was sure Tom had done it out of mere mischief; so Tom was taken up, tried, and condemned to have his head cut off. When Tom heard this dreadful sentence, and seeing a miller stand by with his mouth wide open, he took a good spring

and jumped down the miller's throat, without any body, or even the miller himself seeing him go, or knowing it.

As Tom was now lost, the court broke up, and away went the miller to his mill. But Tom did not leave the poor fellow long at rest; for he began to tumble about in his belly, so that the miller thought himself bewitched, and sent for a doctor. When the doctor came, Tom began to dance and sing, so that the doctor was as much afraid and puzzled as



the miller, and sent in great haste for five more doctors, and twenty learned men. While all these were talking about the affair, the miller happened to yawn; as soon as Tom found this, he made another jump, and came down on his feet in the middle of the table. The miller was mad at seeing that he had been put to so much pain by such a little creature, so he flew into a great passion, caught hold of Tom, and threw him out of the window into the river, and a large salmon snapped him up in a minute. The salmon was soon caught, and sold in the market to the steward of a lord, and

the lord thinking it a fine fish, made a present of it to the king, who ordered it to be dressed directly. When the cook cut open the salmon, he found poor Tom, and ran with him to the king, who was then busy with state affairs, and told the cook to bring him again another day.

At the end of that time, the king sent for him, forgave him for throwing down the furmenty, ordered him a new suit of clothes, and knighted him.



His shirt was made of butterflies' wings,
His boots were made of chicken-skins;
His coat and breeches were made with pride,
A tailor's needle hung by his side;
A mouse for a horse he used to ride.

When he was thus dressed and mounted, he rode a hunting with the king and lords of the court, who all laughed heartily at Tom and his fine prancing steed.

Soon after this, a spider took him for a fly, and ran at him. Tom drew his sword, and fought bravely, but the spider's breath was too strong for him:

He fell dead on the ground where before he had stood
And the spider sucked up the last drop of his blood.

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