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TOM THUMB

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
LONDON AND NEW YORK.

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Title: Tom Thumb

Date of first publication: 1860

Author: Anonymous

Date first posted: February 19, 2013

Date last updated: February 19, 2013

Faded Page eBook #20140208

This eBook was produced by: Marcia Brooks & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>



TOM THUMB.

Merlin, the magician, once stopped at the cottage of a poor couple, who treated him very kindly to the best they had. He saw that they were not content with their lot, and the cottager's wife told him what it was that made them so sorrowful: they much wanted to have a son; and she added, "If it was even no bigger than his father's thumb!" When the Queen of the Fairies heard from Merlin of this wish of the honest couple, she promised to grant it. By-and-by they had, to their great delight, a little son, and sure enough he was no bigger than a large Thumb, and was called, accordingly, Tom Thumb; and owing to his very small size, he was always getting into scrapes.

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 to whom it belonged chanced to see him. "Ah, ah! my little Tom Thumb!" said the boy, "have I caught you at your bad tricks at last? now I will pay you off for thieving." Then drawing the string tight round his neck, and shaking the bag heartily, the cherry-stones bruised Tom's limbs and body sadly, which made him beg to be let out, and promise never to be guilty of such doings any more.



Shortly afterwards, Tom's mother was making a batter pudding, and, that he might see how she mixed it, he climbed up to the edge of the bowl; but his foot happening to slip, he fell over head and ears into the batter, and his mother not observing him, stirred him into the pudding, and popped it all into the pot to boil. The hot water made Tom kick and

struggle; and his mother, seeing the pudding jump up and down in such a furious manner, thought it was bewitched; a tinker was coming by just at the time, so she quickly gave him the pudding, and he put it into his bag and walked away. As soon as Tom could get the batter out of his mouth he began to cry aloud; this so frightened the poor tinker, that he flung the pudding over the hedge, and ran away from it as fast as he could. The pudding being broken to pieces by the fall, Tom was released, and walked home to his mother, who gave him a kiss and put him to bed; and much pleased was she at finding him again.

Tom Thumb's mother once took him with her when she went to milk the cow, and it being a very windy day, she tied him with a needleful of thread to a thistle, that he might not be blown away. The cow, liking his oak-leaf hat, took him and the thistle up at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle, Tom, terrified at her great teeth, which seemed ready to crush him to pieces, cried out, "Mother, mother!" as loud as he could bawl. His mother began to cry and wring her hands; but the cow, surprised at such odd noises in her throat, opened her mouth and let him drop out. His mother then clapped him into her apron, and ran home with him.

Tom's father made him a whip of a barley straw to drive the cattle with, and being one day in the field, Tom slipped into a deep furrow. A raven flying over picked him up with a grain of corn, and flew with him to the top of a giant's castle, by the sea-side, where he left him. Old Grumbo, the giant, came out soon afterwards to walk upon his terrace, and Tom, frightened out of his wits, managed to creep up his sleeve. Tom's motions made the giant feel very uncomfortable, and with a jerk of the arm, he threw him into the sea. A great fish then swallowed him. This fish was soon after caught, and sent as a present to the king. When it was cut open everybody was delighted with little Tom Thumb, who was found inside. The king made him his dwarf; he became the favourite of the whole court, and by his merry pranks, often amused the queen and the Knights of the Round Table.



The king, when he rode out, frequently took Tom in his hand; and, if a shower of rain came on, the tiny dwarf used to creep into the king's waistcoat pocket, and sleep till the rain was over. One day the king asked him about his parents; and when Tom informed his majesty they were very poor people, the king told him he should pay them a visit, and take with him as much money as he could carry. Tom got a little purse, and putting a threepenny piece into it, with much difficulty got it upon his back; and after travelling two days and nights, arrived at his father's house. His mother met him at the door almost tired to death, he having travelled forty-eight hours without resting. They placed him in a walnut-shell by the fire-side, and feasted him for three days upon a hazel-nut.



Tom soon got well, and his mother took him in her hand, and carried him back to King Arthur's Court; there Tom entertained the king and queen, and nobility, at tilts and tournaments, at which he exerted himself so much, that he brought on a fit of sickness, and his life was despaired of. At this juncture the Queen of the Fairies came in a chariot drawn by flying mice, and placing Tom by her side, she drove through the air without stopping till they arrived at her palace. After restoring him to health, and permitting him to enjoy all the gay diversions of Fairy Land, the queen commanded a fair wind, and placing Tom before it, blew him straight back to the court of King Arthur. But just as Tom should have alighted in the court-yard of the palace, the cook happened to pass along with the king's great bowl of his favourite dish of 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!" bellowed the cook; and away went the king's nice furmenty into the kennel. The cook was a red-faced, cross fellow, and declared to the king that Tom had done it out of some evil design; so he was taken up, tried for high treason, and sentenced to be beheaded. When the judge delivered this dreadful sentence, it happened that a miller was standing by with his mouth wide open, so Tom took a good spring, and jumped down his throat, unperceived by all in the court of justice, even by the miller himself.

As Tom could not be found, the court broke up, and away went the miller to his mill. But Tom did not leave him long

at rest; he began to roll and tumble about, so that the miller thought himself bewitched, and sent for a doctor. When the doctor came Tom began to dance and sing; the doctor was as much frightened as the miller, and sent in great haste for five more doctors.

While all these were talking about the disorder in a very tedious style, the miller began to yawn, and Tom, taking the opportunity, made another bold jump, and alighted on his feet, in the middle of the table. The miller, provoked to be thus tormented by such a little creature, fell into a great passion, caught hold of Tom, and threw him out of the window, into the river. A large salmon swimming by, snapped him up in a moment, as he would a fly.



The salmon was soon caught and sold in the market to the steward of a great lord, who made a present of it to the king. When the cook cut open the salmon, he found poor Tom inside, and ran with him directly to the king; but the king, being busy with state affairs, desired that he might be brought another day.

The cook was resolved to keep him safely this time, as he had so lately given him the slip, so clapped him into a mouse-trap. There he was shut up for a whole week, when the king sent for him, forgave him for throwing down the furmenty, and ordered him new clothes, gave him a spirited mouse for a hunter, and knighted him.

As they were riding by a farm-house one day, a cat jumped from behind the door, seized the mouse and little Tom, ran off with them both, and was just going to devour the mouse, when Tom boldly drew his sword, and attacked the cat with great spirit. The king and his nobles seeing Tom in danger, went to his assistance, and one of the lords saved him just in time.

The king ordered a little chair to be made, that Tom might sit on his table. He also gave him a coach drawn by six small mice. This made the queen angry, because she had not a new coach too; therefore, to ruin Tom, she complained to

the king that he had behaved very insolently to her. The king, in a rage, then sent for him. Tom, to escape his fury, crept into a large empty snail-shell, and there lay till he was almost starved; when peeping out of the shell, he saw a fine butterfly that had just settled on the ground. He now ventured forth, and got astride the butterfly, which took wing and mounted into the air with little Tom on his back. Away he flew from tree to tree, till at last he flew to the king's court.

The king, queen, and nobles, all strove to catch the butterfly, but could not. At length poor Tom, having neither bridle nor saddle, slipped from his seat, and fell into a sweet dish called white-pot, where he was found almost drowned. The queen vowed he should be punished, and he was secured once more in a mouse-trap; when the cat seeing something stir, and supposing it to be a mouse, patted the trap about till she broke it, and set Tom at liberty.

Soon afterwards, a Spider, taking poor Tom for a big fly, made a spring at him. Tom drew his sword and fought valiantly, but the spider's poisonous breath overcame him:—

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

The king and his whole court went into mourning for little Tom Thumb. They buried him under a rose-bush, and raised a nice white marble monument over his grave.



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Transcriber's Note: Obvious printer's errors have been silently corrected. All other inconsistencies have been left as in the original.

[The end of *Tom Thumb* by Anonymous]