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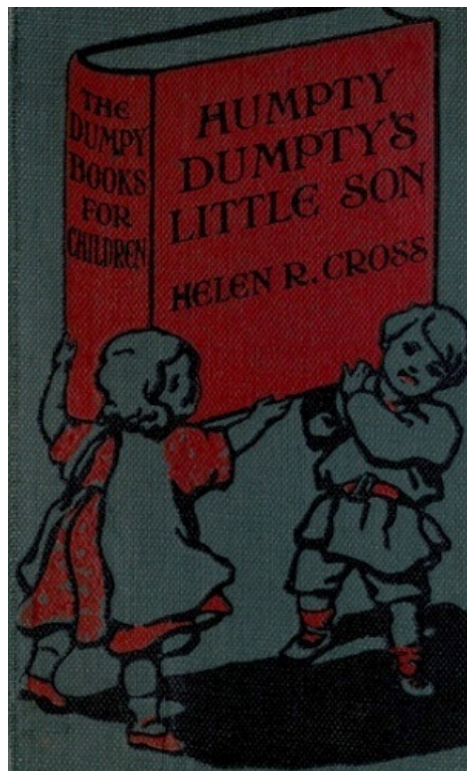
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HUMPTY
DUMPTY'S
LITTLE
SON.

by
Helen Reid Cross.

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HUMPTY DUMPTY'S

LITTLE SON.

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses, and all the
King's men,
Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty
together again."

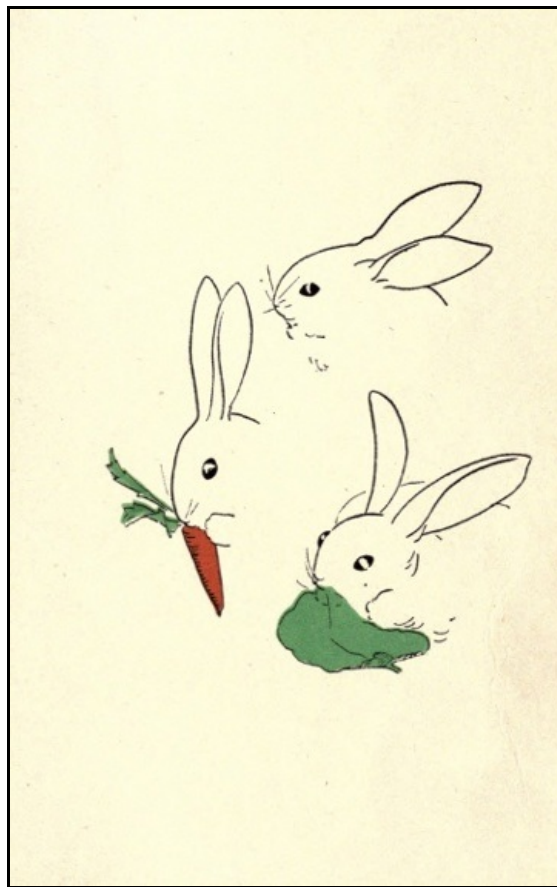
After Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall and all the King's horses and all the King's men could not put him together again, Little Dumpty lived with his Mother, who was called Widow Dumpty, and went to school every day. He set off in good time every morning—even if it was *pouring* with rain. He had a great many friends at school, and the boys liked him because he always had plenty of marbles, and used to carry sticky labels in his pocket; he got them out of his Mother's shop, and gave them as prizes for racing and jumping in play time.





Little Dumpty was a little bit like a *nice* goblin, it was therefore very interesting to his school fellows to have him for a chum, and the funny part about him was that he never took his hat off. Of course no one said anything about it, but they just remembered that his Father was an egg, and got cracked and broken, and they thought that had something to do with it.

Well, I will tell you how Little Dumpty used to spend his time. In summer he used to get up quite early, because he had to feed his pets before breakfast. He had a lot of pets in the yard at the back of the house. He had guinea-pigs, of course, then he had three rabbits and a pair of dormice and a canary; and he had some pigeons. They were rather a bother to him, because they had a nasty habit of flying down the parlour chimney, where sometimes they stuck for two or three days, and at last flew out all black and sooty into the room. Widow Dumpty used to be rather angry and spoke crossly when this happened, and then Little Dumpty used to get up and go out and feed his rabbits, which is what he generally did when he wasn't very happy. Well, then he had a tame hen and some silkworms. Once he had a baby chicken, but it ate some blue chalk, which Dumpty had dropped on the ground, and died. He did all he could to keep it alive but it was no good. He was very sorry about it, because he had often longed for a little chicken of his own; besides his Mother had told him that when it grew up it would be a swimming chicken. It was a pity too he dropped the chalk, because it got trodden on and spoilt, and it had been his favourite chalk.



Well, as I was saying, first he had to feed his pets and to water his garden before the sun got too hot: and by then it was time for breakfast. He and his Mother were always very happy at breakfast (except when there was a pigeon in the chimney). Generally they talked about the garden, and when the seeds were coming up Widow Dumpty used to send Little Dumpty running out to chivvy off the sparrows and starlings who wanted to eat all the young sprouts. In the spring they talked about tadpoles, and wondered how long it would be before they lost their tails; and in the summer time they wondered when Little Dumpty would get a bath; and in the autumn they talked

about the circus which was coming; and in the winter about their "poetry" which they made up, or about the bulbs in the pots at the window, which always looked like blooming for Christmas, and never *did* bloom till March. Oh, and lots of other things!



Little Dumpty generally had bread and milk for breakfast and finished up with honey—for Mrs. Dumpty kept dear little bees in her garden, so there was always plenty of that:—but on Sundays Dumpty had a poached egg for breakfast, for a treat. When he'd

done his breakfast Dumpty used to have to look sharp and open the shop for his Mother and sweep the step, and by then it was time for school, so he got his books together and trotted off.

He used always to meet his "chum" on the way; *his* name was Binkie, and he lived with his father at the Blacksmith's—his father *was* the Blacksmith, and there was no Mrs. Blacksmith because she was dead, but Binkie's aunt, who was a very kind lady, used to take care of Binkie; *her* name was Miss Amelia Bloater.

Well, every morning Binkie and Dumpty trudged off to school together. Dumpty's favourite lesson was writing, he simply *loved* doing copies, and once he got a prize for writing; he was quite delighted about it, and often wished he could get another, and after being at school four years, at last he did—that was for scripture.





Dumpty used to stay at school all day and had dinner with the big boys; in the afternoon there was "prep," and at four o'clock school was over and all the boys were jolly glad.

On his way home from school Dumpty used to stop and get cow-parsley for his rabbits, and when silkworms were "in" he used to have to go into Binkie's garden to get mulberry leaves, because Binkie's father had a mulberry tree in his garden and Dumpty's Mother hadn't. One day when Dumpty got in from school he found that a horrid great rat had got into the empty hutch where he kept all his grain for feeding his pets and had eaten it all and bitten one of the baby pigeons! He was so sad about it—but Binkie's father soon brought in his dogs and they caught the nasty rat. Dumpty's Mother often said she didn't know what she would do without her kind neighbour the Blacksmith.

Well, by the time Master Dumpty got in from school it was pretty well tea time, and in the summer he and his Mother often had it in the garden, not *too* far from the house, so that if anyone came into the shop they could hear, that is to say they *might* hear if he banged on the counter loud, or shut the shop door with a slam;—then Dumpty would run fast and serve in the shop for his Mother. Sometimes the customers were such a long time choosing a peppermint stick or a few glass beads that Dumpty thought he should never get back to his tea;—and they had radishes and lettuce out of their own garden. And directly after tea Little Dumpty did *just* what he liked till bed-time.

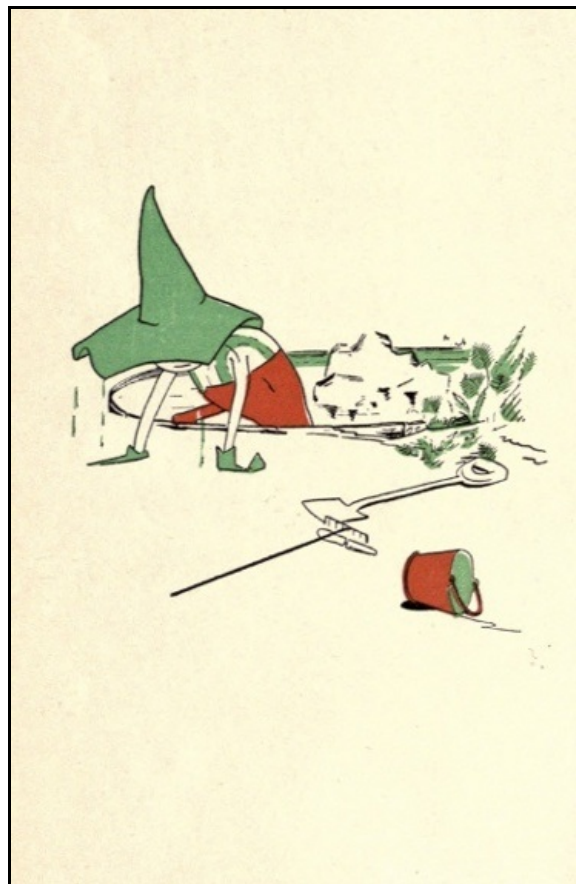
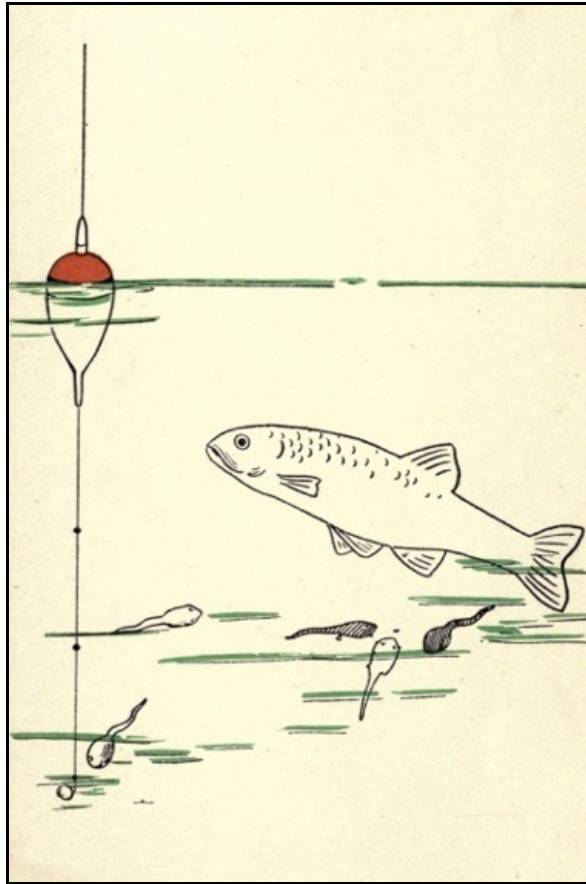


I must tell you now about the things Little Dumpty *did* like: there were lots of things, and he liked them all in turn.

One thing he loved was ponding, which began as soon as the days were warm enough. He used to go with a net and a little tin pail and catch all kinds of fish and little insects out of the pond and put them in his aquarium, but he called it his "acquair." His "acquair" was a glass bell stood on its end and filled at the bottom with sand, and on top with water for the things to swim about in. Minnows, and sometimes sticklebats (but not *generally* sticklebats, because, though they looked nice they used to eat up

the other things so), and of course tadpoles (when they were "in") and water-snails with pointed shells and caddis-worms and water boatmen, and "little reddies"—oh! and anything he caught in his net. Little Dumpty used to bring them all home in his pail and keep them in the "acquair."

That's what Little Dumpty and his Mother used to talk about at breakfast, "how long before the tadpoles lost their tails."



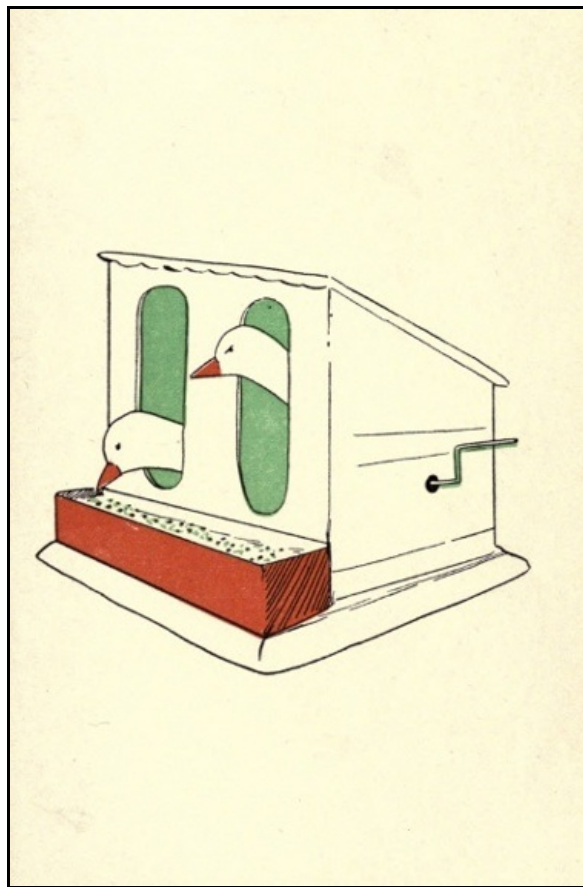
Once when Mrs. Dumpty went away to see a sick friend and Dumpty was left all to himself he thought he would have a lovely acquair in the middle of his own garden, just like a real pond, so he dug a big hole and planted ferns round it, and then he got a big bath and put it in the hole he had dug, and filled it with water; and it looked grand, and Dumpty thought some clinkers and with great trouble managed to push them right out to the middle, he was just putting in the last one when he toppled and fell splash-bash right into the water. He was in an awful mess when he got out! And his Mother, who came home just at that minute, was very angry with him. Poor Little Dumpty was very sad and ashamed of himself.





The CIRCUS always came to Eggy in the autumn, and as Little Dumpty's birthday was on October 31st his Mother always let him go to it for a birthday treat. He and Binkie used to go together. It was lovely fun first of all to go round by the tents and see the men getting ready for the Show. Little Dumpty felt that he knew quite a lot of what went on behind the scenes, for one day a man who was putting up the tents let him hold his hammer for him. Dumpty saw him afterwards playing in the band and gave him a little nod, but the man was too busy to see him. It disappointed Dumpty rather. The Circus was always a treat, but the best part was when the clown with the performing pony said, "Now Topsy"—that was the pony's name—"you just show me who you think would make the finest soldier in all this audience," and the pony ran straight across the ring and nodded its head at Dumpty! It pleased him, because Dumpty always said he was going to be a soldier when he grew up, and he often played at being one. That pony knew lots of things, it could say what the time was, and could tell how many of the Kings of England had been named Edward, but when the clown asked the pony "who was the butcher's sweetheart?" Topsy made a great mistake and all the people laughed, for he went and nodded at Binkie's grown-up sister, and she had *always* promised to marry Dumpty when he was big enough.

But I think Little Dumpty liked the winter evenings best of all, when he and his Mother were so cosy in the little kitchen at the back of the shop. They used to have great games together. Dumpty had his own circus, and gave grand performances to his Mother. She used to sit in the "Royal Box" (which was the corner with a shawl round it, and a cushion for her feet). She dressed him a little doll, who was master of the ring, and he had lots of animals in his procession. Two elephants and a bear on hind legs, and a bear on four legs, a zebra, a tiger, a big squirrel, some tin horses, and some lovely horses covered with real hair, a set of performing frogs, and oh! heaps more.



Then for the performance he would sing, and recite the pieces of poetry which he and his Mother had made up (that's what I told you they talked about at breakfast). For instance, there were two geese in a pen which you wound up, and Dumpty would put on a quackie voice and say:—

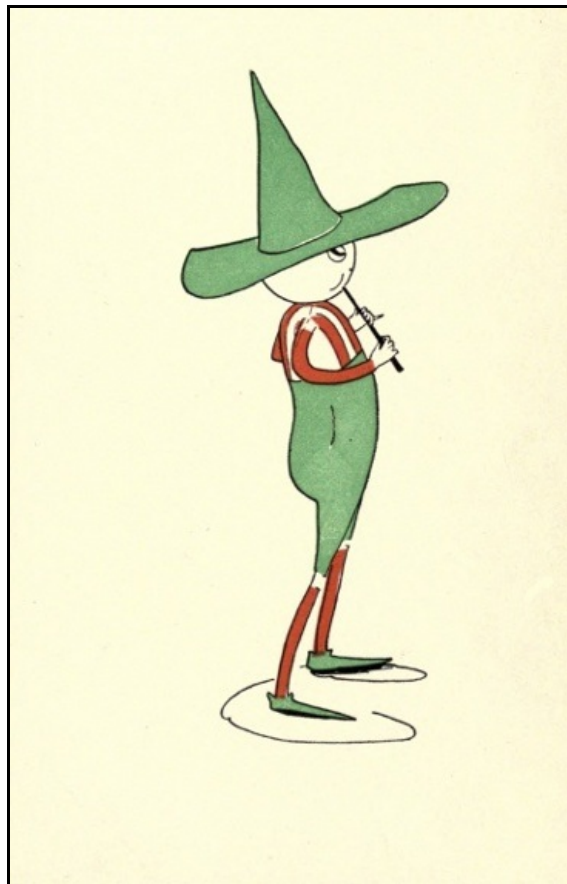
Some mischief sure will Satan find
For idle hands—however sweet,
So in your idle moments wind
My little geese, and watch them

eat.

And as you wind, this lesson good
Ma' rag-time geese would teach
to thee;
Never to grab or snatch your food,
However hungry you may be.

Then he had some performing mice in a cage, with clockwork inside, and as he wound them up he sang:—

Oh, three performing mice are we,
And when you wind us up you see,
We twirl and twiddle round the
cage,
And play at leap-frog on the stage.
And when the master of the ring,
Commands us, we can also sing
That story sad—though true to life,
Of Blind Mice, and the Farmer's
wife.





And then Little Dumpty and his mother sang "Three Blind Mice" together, very slowly and sadly:—

Three Blind Mice!
See how they run!
They all ran after the Farmer's
Wife,
Who cut off their tails with the
carving knife,
Did you ever see such a thing in
your life
As three Blind Mice?

When he got all his horses on the stage (he put the skin ones in front because they were the loveliest), he used to pretend they danced while he whistled a tune on the penny whistle.

Then there was a china girl with a parachute; when she was on the stage Little Dumpty recited the piece called "Isabella's Parachute" out of a favourite book he had called "Cautionary Stories":—

Once as little Isabella
Ventured with a large umbrella,
Out upon a rainy day
She was nearly blown away.

Sadly frightened then was she,
For 'twas very near the sea,
And the wind was very high,
But, alas! no friend was nigh.

Luckily her good mamma
Saw her trouble from afar;
Running just in time, she caught
her
Pretty little flying daughter.

And if he got an encore, which he often did for this piece, for he *loved* saying it, he used to tell the story of Robert:—



When the rain comes tumbling
down
In the country or the town,
All good little girls and boys
Stay at home and mind their toys.

Robert thought,—“No, when it
pours,

It is better out of doors."
Here you see him, silly fellow,
Underneath his red umbrella.

Now look at the silly fellow,
The wind has caught his red
umbrella,
Up he flies to the skies;
No one hears his screams and
cries.

No one ever yet could tell
Where he stopped, or where he
fell:
Only, this one thing is plain,
Bob was never seen again!

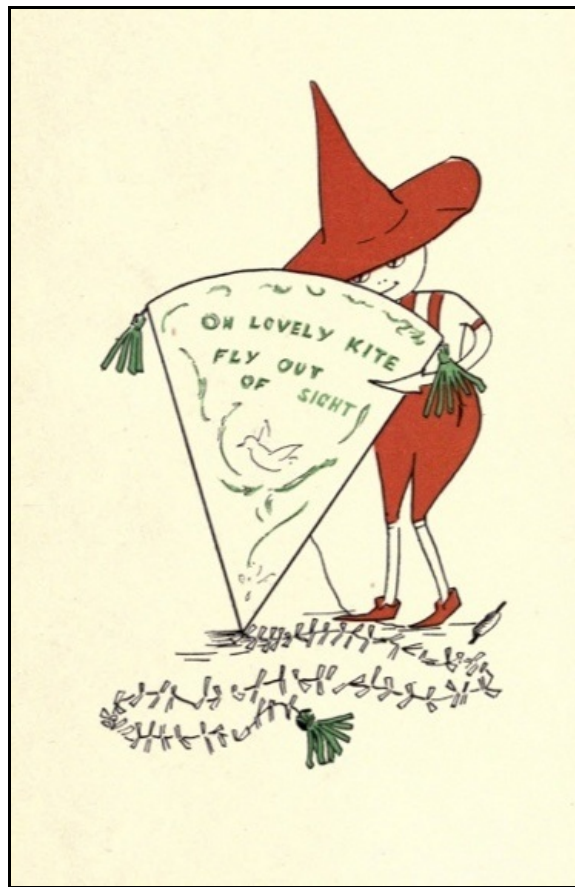
And they always used to finish up with the black nigger girl on horseback:—

Dis yah am de niggah gal
Come to say good night,
Wishin' all de picanninies
Dreams of fairies bright.
Wishin' all de niggah boys,
Plently laugh and fun,
Wishin' dat this circus game
Was only jus' begun,
'Stead of bein' as 'tis now,
Finished, when I've made my bow.

Then Little Dumpty made her jump up on the bareback horse and bow to his Mother.

At half-past seven Dumpty had to "prepare," as he said, that is he had to begin to think about bed, just so that bed-time shouldn't come when he was in the middle of something *very* interesting, and at a quarter to eight he had to go. He gave his Mother a kiss, and often when he had been very good and happy she gave him an acid drop to suck when he was in bed.





Well, of course there were lots more things Little Dumpty used to do: I can't tell them all because it would take too long if I were to tell you all about his chinks and his paints and his stone bricks and his silver paper ball and his kite—why it would fill ever so many books, but I *must* tell you one thing more and that is about his card houses. He was better at that than at anything, and one night his Mother offered a prize of a cake of new emerald green paint if he could build eight houses. And he *did*. He tried ever so many times; and his Mother had to let him sit up a little later because just as he had got to the sixth storey safely, safely, after striving very much, the clock struck a quarter to eight. It would have been too bad to send him off then, when he longed to do it so. It quite made his fingers tremble to put on the last card. It was a good thing he succeeded that once, for he never did it again, and he *did* want the green paint so!



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