



# Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

## HUMPTY DUMPTY

"HOW would you like to live in a looking-glass house? Let's pretend that the glass has gotten all soft like gauze so that we can get through. Why, it is turning into a sort of a mist now. I declare, it will be easy enough to get through," said a little girl named Alice, and before she had finished speaking she was up on the mantelpiece, standing before a big looking-glass which certainly was already beginning to melt away. In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had lightly jumped down into the looking-glass room.

"Oh, what fun it will be when they see me through the glass in here and cannot get at me," thought Alice to herself.

Then she began to look about, and, strange to say, everything was just like the room she had left, only now all the pictures and everything seemed alive. The clock on the mantelpiece had a face like an old man, and grinned at her whenever she looked at it.



"THEY do not keep this room so tidy as the other," Alice thought to herself. At that moment she heard a strange sound, and with an "Oh!" of surprise she peeped around the side of the fireplace, and there saw a funny little old woman who looked like a sheep. When she saw Alice she looked up from her knitting and said:

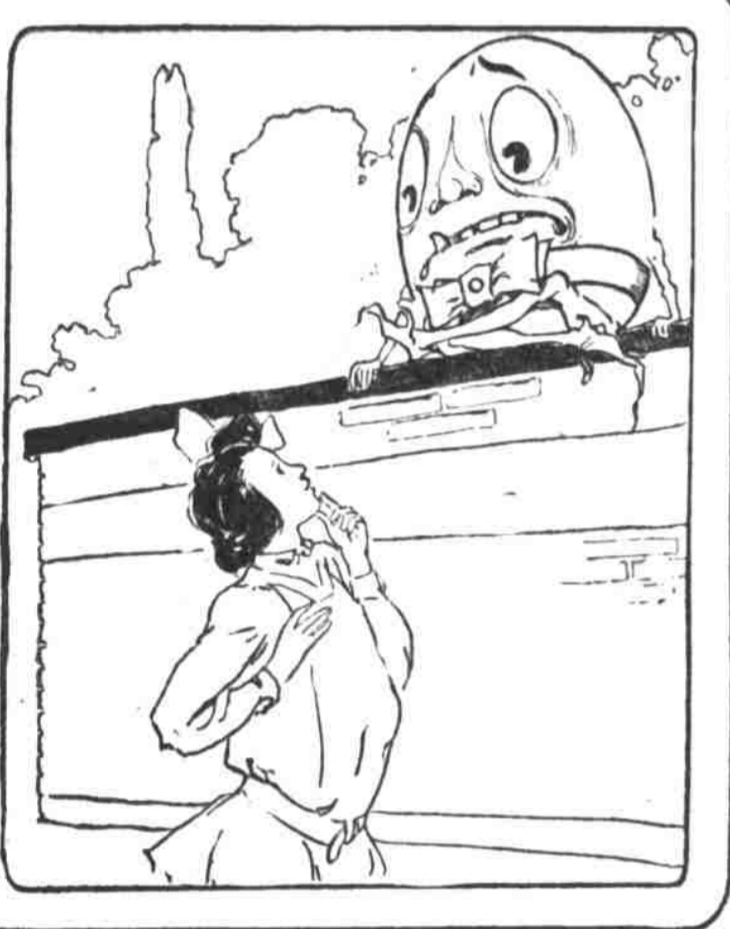
"What do you want to buy?"

Alice was not only surprised, but very much frightened, and, as she was very hungry, the only reply she could think of was:

"I should like to buy an egg," which she said quite timidly.

"Only one?" said the old woman. "If you buy two you have to eat them."

"Then I will only take one," said Alice, and she handed the woman a penny that she found in her pocket.



THE woman took the money and put it in a box and then went off to the other end of the room. Taking an egg out of the closet she set it on a shelf, and then beckoned to Alice to take it.

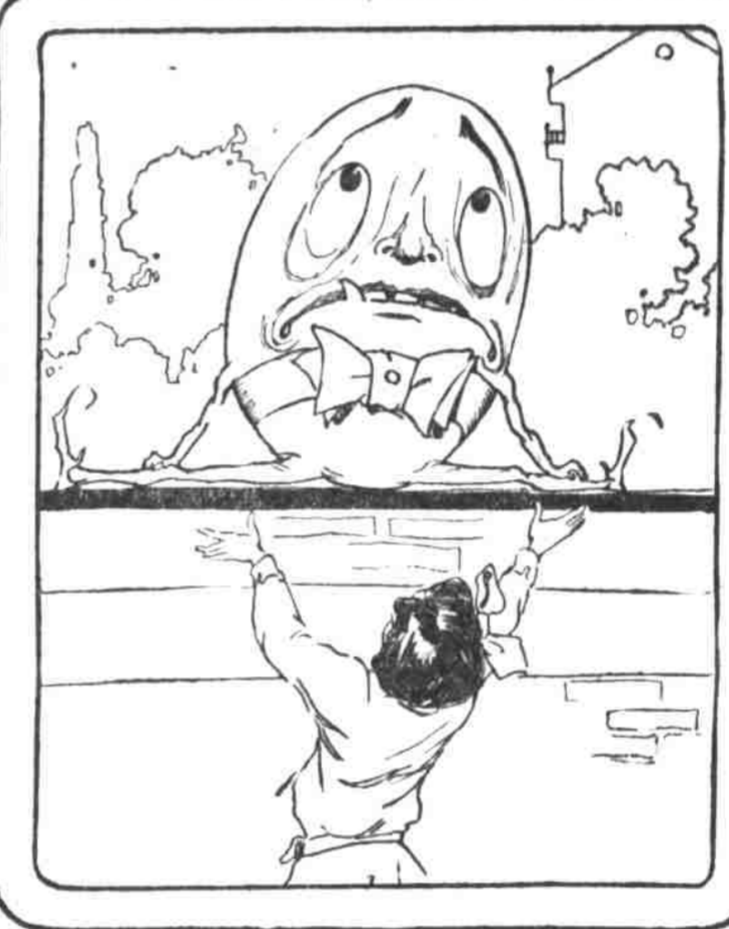
Alice started to walk across the room after it, but the egg seemed to get farther away the more she walked.

"How odd," Alice said as she walked: "This looks like a chair, but it has branches. How very strange to find trees growing here."

She wondered more and more at every step, for everything turned into a tree the moment she came up to it, and she quite expected the egg to do the same.

However, the egg only got larger and larger, and when she came within a few yards of it she was greatly surprised to see that it had eyes and a nose and mouth, and when she went closer still who should it be but Humpty-Dumpty himself.

"It cannot be anybody else," she said to herself.



HUMPTY-DUMPTY was sitting, with his very thin, short legs crossed like a Turk's, on the top of a high wall. It was a very narrow one, and Alice wondered how he could keep his balance. His eyes were away out to each side and looked in opposite directions, and he did not seem to see Alice, or, at least, he took no notice of her.

"He must be a stuffed figure after all, and yet how exactly like an egg he is," she said aloud, standing with her hands ready to catch him, for every moment she expected him to fall.

"It's very provoking," Humpty-Dumpty said after a long silence, looking away from Alice as he spoke, "to be called an egg."

"I said you looked like an egg," Alice explained gently, "and some eggs are very pretty, you know," she added, hoping to turn it into a sort of compliment.

"Some people," said Humpty-Dumpty, looking away from her, "have no more sense than a baby."

Alice did not know what to say to this, as he did not seem to be talking to her, but rather to a tree, judging from the way he looked. So she softly repeated to herself:

"Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall;

Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall.

All the King's horses and all the King's men

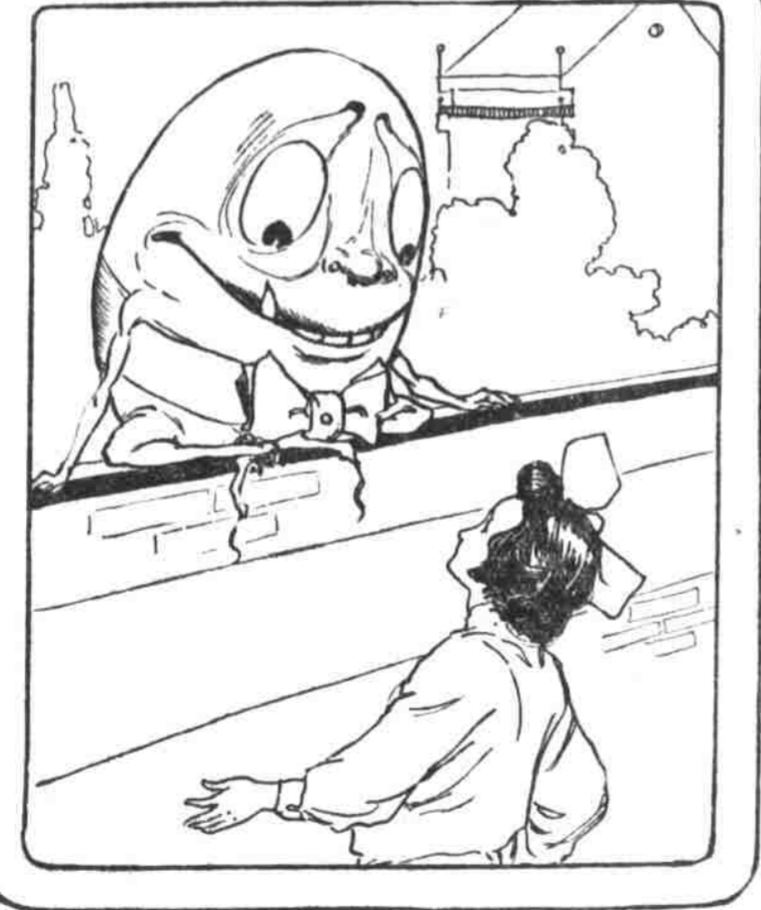
Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty up again."

"That last line is too long," she added, forgetting that Humpty-Dumpty could hear her.

"I do not think so," said Humpty-Dumpty; "the King promised me to—"

"To send all his horses and all his men," Alice interrupted. "Now I think that is too bad, Humpty-Dumpty; you have been listening or you couldn't have known."

"Well, they write such things in books, I know. That's what you call history. Now, take a good look at me. I have spoken to a King! You will never see such another," and he grinned from ear to ear, and almost fell off the wall.



"WHAT a beautiful belt you have on," Alice suddenly said.

"It is a most provoking thing when a person doesn't know a necktie from a belt," said Humpty-Dumpty, wagging his head gravely from side to side.

"I know I am stupid," said Alice gently. "Will you forgive me?"

Humpty-Dumpty was sorry he was so cross, and said:

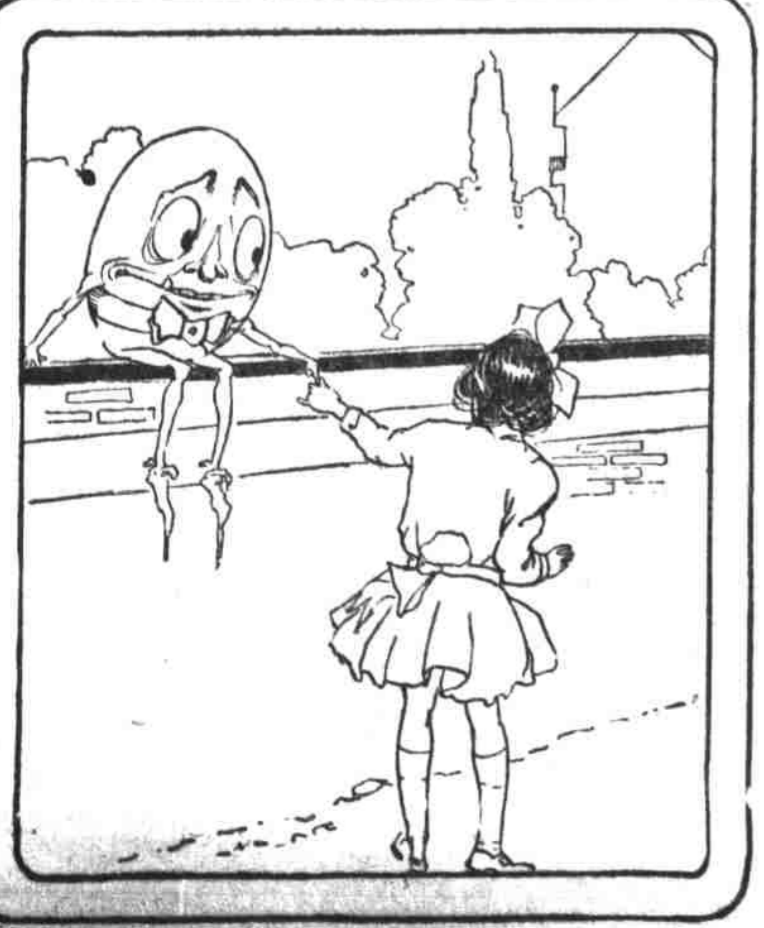
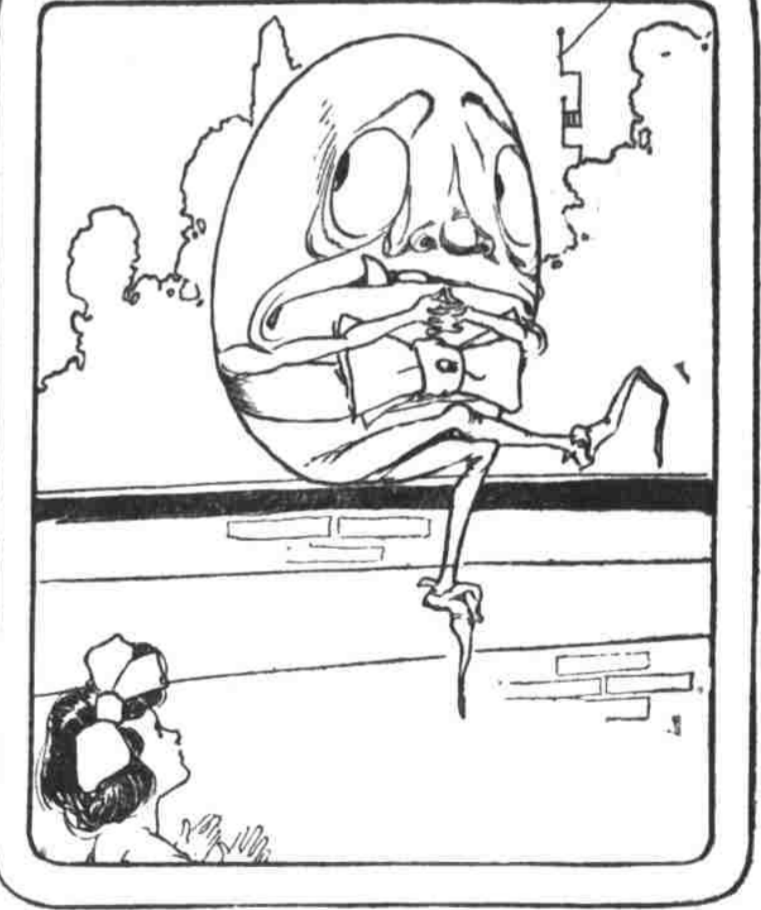
"Yes, child, it is a necktie. The White Queen gave it to me," and he crossed one knee over the other, clasping his hands around them. "Did you ever hear this piece I am going to repeat for you?"

Alice sat down to listen.

"In winter when the fields are white,

I sing this song for your delight—Only I do not sing it," he added.

"I see you do not," said Alice.



"IF YOU can see whether I am singing or not you've sharper eyes than most people," said Humpty-Dumpty.

Then he repeated a lot more, and at last Alice, growing very tired, said:

"Isn't that all?"

"That's all," said Humpty-Dumpty; "good-bye."

"This was very sudden," Alice said to herself, and after such a strong hint she thought she ought to be going. She got up and held out her hand to Humpty-Dumpty.

"Good-bye till we meet again," she said cheerfully.

"I shouldn't know you again if we did meet,"

Humpty-Dumpty replied, giving her one of his fingers to shake. "You look just like other people."

"You know people by their faces," said Alice.



"THAT'S just what I complain of," said Humpty-Dumpty. "Your face is just like everybody else's. Two eyes, nose in the middle, and mouth under it. It is always the same. If you had two eyes on one side of your nose, and a mouth at the top, that would be some help."

"It would not look nice," said Alice, laughing.

Humpty-Dumpty shut his eyes and said:

"Wait till you've tried."

Alice waited a moment to see if he would speak again, but he never opened his eyes or took any further notice of her. She said "Good-bye" once more, and, as he made no reply, she walked away, saying to herself:

"Of all the queer people I ever—" She never finished what she was going to say, for at that moment a heavy crash shook all the trees and everything, and Alice woke up with a start. And that was the end of the looking-glass room, and she knew it was all a dream.