


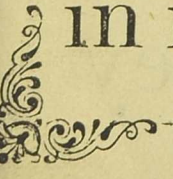
THE REAL HISTORY

OF

Humpty Dumpty.

You have often heard people speak of Humpty Dumpty: how he got on a wall, how he had a great fall, and how not all the king's horses and all the king's men could put Humpty Dumpty together again; now I shall tell you his real history.

Humpty Dumpty was a little man with a fat face, short round legs, and a big body. He was very proud of his wealth, and very vain. He wore every day in the week a red cloak, and a hat with a white feather in it; and he strutted about also with



a broad riband, to which hung a sword with a gold hilt and a velvet sheath. Humpty Dumpty was the lord of all the lands round the village in which he lived, and he had also many castles to which he travelled sometimes.

He rode in a gilt coach, drawn by white horses as round as himself. He had two tall footmen to stand behind the carriage, and a very proud coachman on the box, who used, like his master, to turn up his nose at what they both called the common people, as if all were not alike in God's eyes, the rich as well as the poor.

Humpty Dumpty, having little to do, used from his gilt coach to ogle all the pretty girls. But they



were good girls there, who did not notice people because they had plenty of money, but only when they were kind and useful ; and as Humpty Dumpty was neither, none of the pretty girls there would have anything to say to him.

At length he fell in love with a very pretty girl, who lived with her father and mother in the village ; she was not only pretty but good, and loved by every body who knew her. She assisted her old mother about the house, and walked with her old father to church every Sunday, the old lady was too infirm to go about much. The maid had a lover already too, who was a farmer's son in the village, who liked her very much, I assure you ; and as

he was a handsome, manly fellow, very obedient to his parents, and hard-working, I am bound to confess she liked him too, but she did not tell this to him for a long, long time afterwards.

Humpty Dumpty, with all his fine clothes, his gilt coach, his four white horses, his proud coachman, and his sword and feather, could not win the hand of a poor maiden who had nothing but good looks and good heart for a dower; and this made my lord Humpty Dumpty so vexed that he almost lost his wits; he would order out his gilt coach and his tall footmen, and drive up and down the road in front of the house where the pretty good little maiden lived as much

as seven or eight times in the day. Indeed I was told that one Sunday afternoon alone he rode by her house in state at least a dozen times, so that the passers by could not help laughing at his strange behaviour.

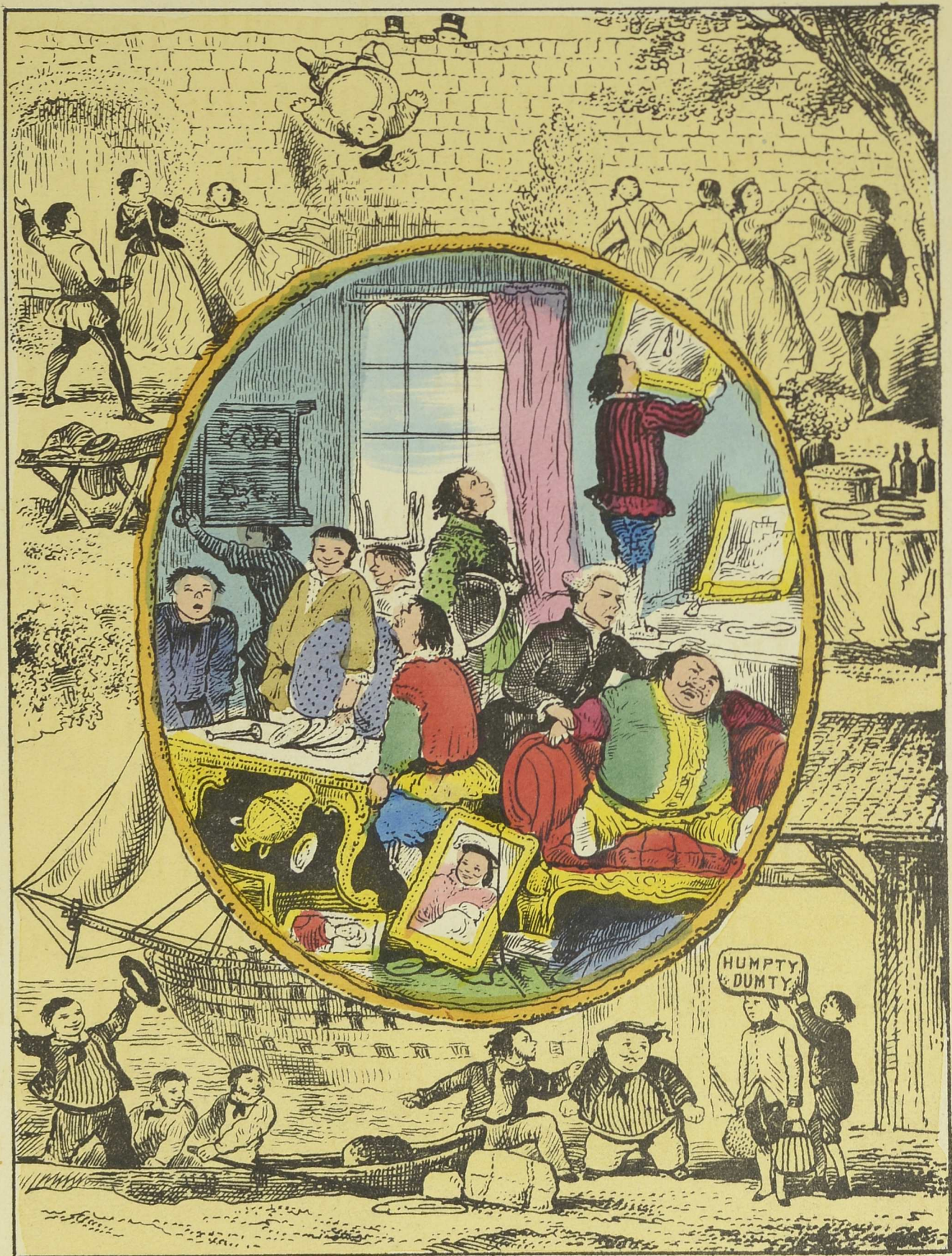
At length Humpty Dumpty had the wickedness one morning, when the pretty maiden was going out for a walk, to seize her, and carry her away in his gilt coach. She was so shocked at his bad conduct that she fainted away, in which sad state he carried her to his castle, a long way off, all among the woods. When Humpty Dumpty got the little maiden into his castle, he had her carried into a very grand room, hung round with silk curtains, and

where there was a sofa, with velvet cushions and tassels of real gold. As she sat upon the sofa, Humpty Dumpty knelt at her feet and besought her to marry him; but it was of no use that he knelt. She told him plainly that she did not like him. "Then," says this wicked Humpty Dumpty, rising up in a passion, "here you shall stop for ever, or until you change your mind." He left her alone there in the room with the door locked to hinder her from getting away. She was very unhappy; over her head where she sat was a picture of Humpty Dumpty in a great gilt frame, and this made her smile sometimes, for it was painted so that it had taken all his ugliness away.



In the mean time the people in the village, some on horseback and some on foot, with sticks, and clubs, and stones, and anything they could lay their hands on, came in a hurry to the castle to rescue the pretty maiden from the power of this wicked Humpty Dumpty. But the castle was very strong, and it took them a whole day before they could break the great door in, and they had no ladders to climb up the walls. They got into the castle at last, and broke open the door of the room where the pretty maiden was confined. The first who entered it was her sweetheart, who bore her away in his arms ; but Humpty Dumpty could not be found. Two days after Humpty Dumpty started off

again at the head of some wicked men, whom he hired with money, to carry her away to another castle among the hills by the sea. As he came to the house he heard the sound of merrymaking, and made his tall footmen lift him on to the garden wall, when he found she had been just married to her lover; on which, in his rage losing his balance, he fell from the wall. He was very much hurt, and they carried him home in his gilt coach. When he got well, he sold his castles and houses, and all his fine things, sent off his proud coachman and tall footmen, and went abroad. I have never heard anything about him since.



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