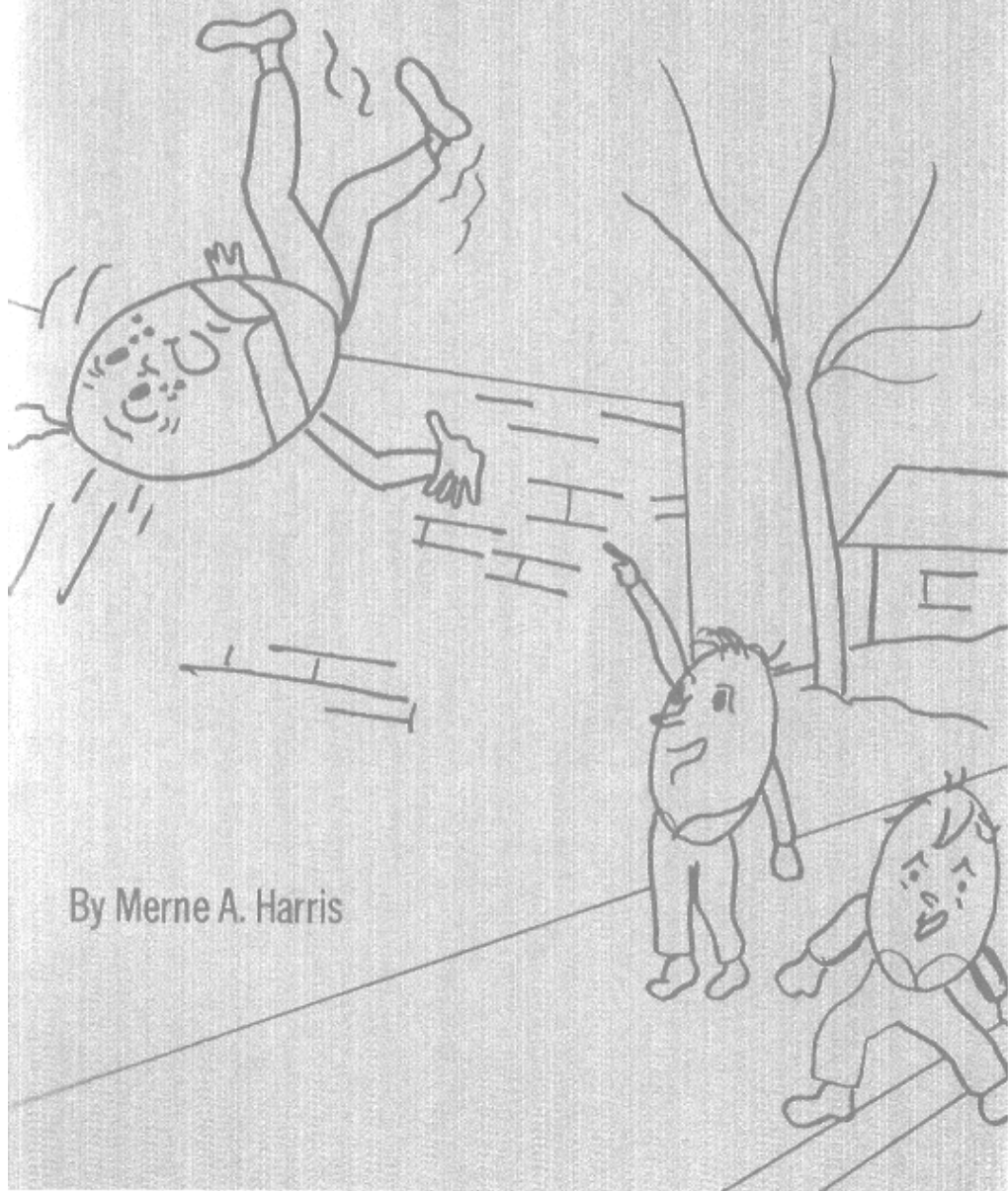


# Humpty Dumpty

AND HIS FRIENDS



By Merne A. Harris

*Humpty Dumpty*

AND HIS FRIENDS

Familiar Truths of the Christian Life

as interpreted

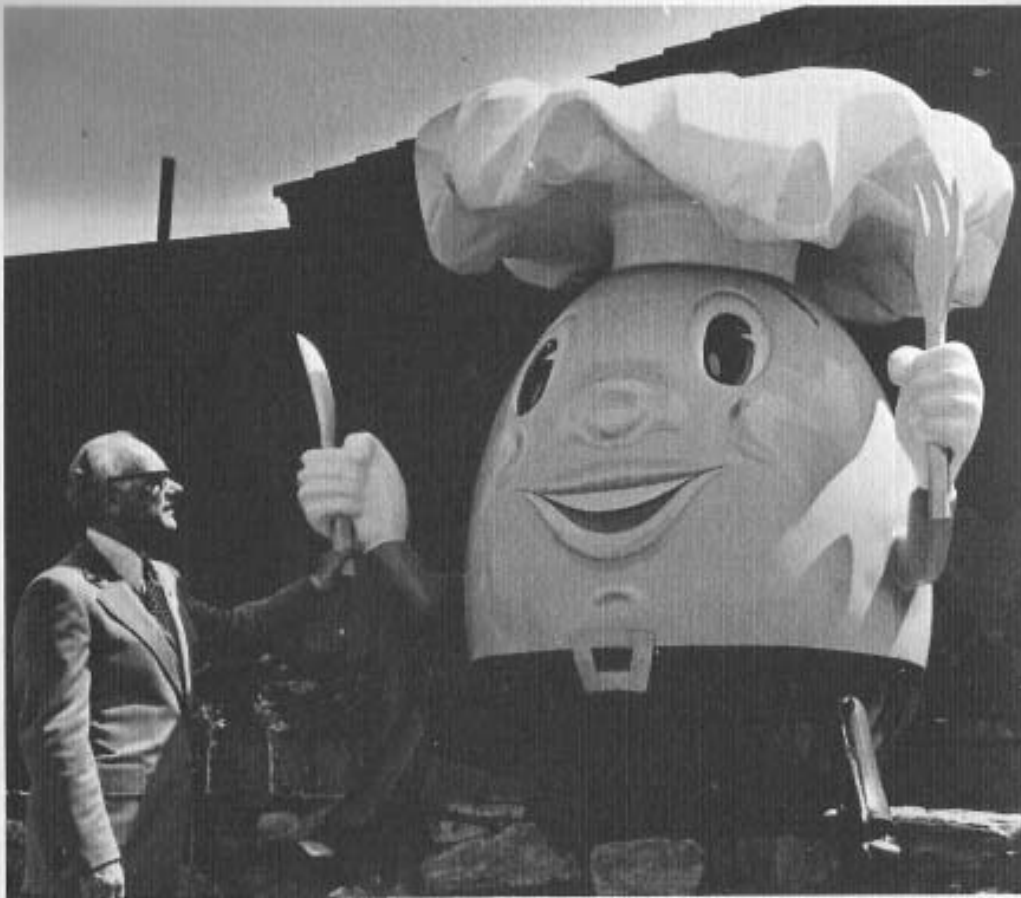
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Dr. Harris and his friend

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## PREFACE

Parents and teachers have been telling nursery rhymes for centuries, but I know of no preacher who has used them to illustrate the main thrust of his sermon. In my case, it began, of all places, in a college chapel service. In driving home an appeal for faithfulness to our Christian heritage, I used Humpty-Dumpty, history's first "egg-head," as a classic example of what happens to those who ignore their heritage—they crack up! (There is, as in all disciplines, a revisionist interpretation which says Humpty Dumpty had a great fall because he had had a lousy summer!) In any case, the Vennard College students liked that first attempt so other nursery rhymes were used subsequently. I always introduced them, jokingly, as "classics of American Literature"—to the discomfiture of all literature teachers.

The stories have now been used in a wide variety of settings, and I guess the reason I have so enjoyed telling them is because of their broad appeal. Children have come to church guessing among themselves what the nursery rhyme would be—but so have preachers at ministerial retreats! Young people have chuckled as they anticipated my application of the story to the sermon—as have their grandparents! Common folks have asked me to use more of them—but a learned psychiatrist wanted them as much as they did!

And from all kinds of people has come the request that these nursery rhyme applications be put in print. I have now done so, with the hope that more may enjoy and use them. However, I hope for more than that. No nursery rhyme was ever used in a gospel service unless I was convinced it would carry a message. I pray the same as they now take printed form.

## THE ORIGINAL HANG-UP KID

Mrs. Dumpty was terribly upset. At a meeting of the "Ladies Egg Society" she had over-heard the members discussing her son. It seemed that he had been seen walking on walls! And so, that very evening she informed her husband: "Dear, this just can't go on. You've got to have a 'yolk-to-yolk' talk with Humpty and get him to stop all this foolishness about wall-walking."

"I'll try," he said, "but he seems to have built such a 'shell' around himself these days."



So the next evening Mr. Dumpty talked to Humpty. But they got nowhere. To his father's insinuations that eggs had never walked on walls and that a new tradition would not start with the Dumptys Humpty only replied traditions get outmoded and progress comes from courageous innovations.

So Humpty went to rejoin his friends waiting at the village wall. And when he got there he felt such an urge "to climb a little higher." So, "egged on" by his friends, Humpty Dumpty soon found himself high on the wall.

And then it happened!  
A gust of wind...  
an obscure pebble...  
a blinding sense of self-confidence....  
and Humpty fell with a sickening crash to the walk below.



As his sorrowful friends gathered around him, one said: "Well, that's Humpty Dumpty all over!"

And it was, in more ways than one. It was all over in terms of what he could have become . . . .

one of an order of two sunnyside up  
or an ingredient in a delicious chocolate cake  
or a rooster to be fried to enter the ministry.

(Which reminds me of the mother hen who spurned consolation when her rooster son had been slain to be fed to some preacher. "After all," she said, "he would never have made a good 'lay' member!")

But all that he could have been was now lost forever. Which leads one to observe that the road of self-assertion is often the road to self-destruction as well.

(I Corinthians 6:20)

