The History of Tom Thumb.

The bank to Tom Thumb such a mountain appeared,
That he would never get to the bottom, he feared.
"It will take me a week to go down it," said he,
"And when I am down there, what good will it be?
I'll stop where I am, till a lark comes this way,
Then I'll mount on its back and fly quite away."
Just then, as he spoke, he saw near the bank
A friend of the Queen's—a Duke of high rank.
"I am caught now at last," said poor Tom, in a fright,
And I much want to sleep with my head on tonight.
But how to escape, I am sure I can't tell—
Ah! there's a fine butterfly close to the shell!
I'll jump on its back, and be off in a trice—
A ride on a butterfly's back must be nice.
The Duke saw Sir Thomas just taking his flight,
So he called to him kindly, "Sir Thomas, goodnight."
"Oh, Duke," said our hero, "I guess what you mean—
Good-night, sir, and give my respects to the Queen."
Then up flew the butterfly—Tom with him went,
But the butterfly could not make out what it meant,
That, without asking leave, any mortal should dare
To jump on his back, and take a ride there.
So he flew over houses, and churches, and trees,
And Tom soon began to feel not quite at ease.
The butterfly tried to make Tom Thumb fall down;
In a puddle he threw him, that there he might drown.
Tom Thumb thought that drowning would not do him good,
So he called out for help quite as loud as he could.
And whilst he was shouting, two soldiers came by:
"Sir Thomas," said they, "the King says you must die,
But you know, it is said, whilst there is life there is hope,
And 'tis better to wait for the axe or the rope,
Than to drown in a puddle—so now, out you come,
And we shall get something for finding Tom Thumb."

When they came to the palace, the King had gone out;
The Queen heard a noise, and asked what 'twas about.
They told her that little Tom Thumb had been found—
"Before he was lost," said the Queen, "I'll be bound;
The King likes that dwarf, and will not have him killed,
But I'll let him know, that I, too, am self-willed;
Put Tom in a mouse-trap, and there let him stay,
Give him nothing to eat or to drink all the day.
So there, in the trap, poor Tom Thumb was kept,
And, more from vexation than hunger, he wept.
The Queen's kitten thought that a mouse or a rat
In the trap had been caught, so she gave it a pat.
She was rather surprised when our hero she saw,
And she opened the trap by a dab of her paw.
Once more Tom was free; but a spider came by,
And taking the knight for a blue-bottle fly,
Sprang forward to seize him; when our brave little knight
Stood his ground, drew his sword, and made ready to fight;
But the spider drew near, and his poisonous breath
So affected poor Tom that it soon caused his death.
He fell on the ground where he lately had stood,
And the spider sucked up the last drop of his blood.
The King and the court into deep mourning went;
Two days and three nights in lamenting they spent.
Then under a rose-bush they buried Tom Thumb—
His monument cost them a very large sum;
For on it his name, death, and doings were told,—
It had this inscription, in letters of gold:
"Here lies Tom Thumb, King Arthur's knight,
Who died by a spider's cruel bite.
He was well known in Arthur's court,
Where he afforded gallant sport;
He rode at tilt and tournament,
And on a mouse a-hunting went.
Alive, he filled the court with mirth;
His death to sorrow soon gave birth.
Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head,
And cry, 'Alas! Tom Thumb is dead.'"