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Tom Twist

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Tom Twist was a wonderful fellow;
No boy was so nimble or strong.
He could turn ten somersaults backwards,
And stand on his head all day long.

Tom Twist liked the life of the sailor,
And with a hop and a skip,
He turned ten somersaults backwards,
And landed on board of a ship.

The ship went down in a tempest,
A thousand leagues from shore,
And Tommy dove under the breakers,
And swimming ten miles reached the shore,

The shore was a cannibal's island;
The natives were hungry enough.
They felt our Tommy all over,
And found him entirely too tough.

So they put him into a boy-coop,
To fatten him up, you see.
But Tom crept out very swiftly,
And running a mile, clim' a tree.

On the tree is the nest of a condor,
A bird with prodigious big wings,
Who dined upon boa constrictors,
And other digestible things.

The condor flew home in the evening,
And there ate friend Tommy so snug.
(The reason, it seems, was) she thought him
A remarkable specie of bug.

She soon woke him up with her kicking,
And Tommy gave one of his springs,
And landed on the back of the condor,
Between his long neck and his wings.

The condor flew pitching and tumbling,

But Tommy held on with firm hands.
Away with a scream flew the condor,
O'er oceans, and forests, and lands.

Then getting quite tired of his burden,
He flew quite close to the ground.
Tom untwisted his legs from the creature
And quickly slid off with a bound.

He landed all right and feet foremost,
A little confused by his fall.
And there he "essaned" himself,
On top of a great Chinese wall.

He traveled the city of Peking,
And he made the Chinamen grin.
By turning ten somersaults backwards
So they made him a Mandarin.

So Tommy had to play the Celestial,
And dangle a long pigtail,
And dine upon puppies and kittens,
Till his spirits began for to fail.

He sighs for his dear home and "arbor,"
He sighs for his ham and eggs,
In turning ten somersaults backwards,
His pigtail got caught in his legs.

He sailed for his dear home and "arbor,"
The house of his mother he knew.
He climbed up the lightning rod quickly,
And came down the chimney flue.

His mother lay there a-dreaming,
She never would see him more.
She opened her eyes and Tommy
Stood there on the bedroom floor.

Her nightcap flew off in amazement;
Her hair stood on end with surprise.
"What kind of a ghost or a spirit,
Is this that I see with my eyes!"

"It is your most dutiful Tommy."
"I will not believe it," she said.
"Until you turn ten somersaults backward,
And stand half an hour on your head."

"Oh, that I will do, dearest mother,"
So off with a skip and a hop,
He turned the ten somersaults backward
And then was unable to stop.

The stunt took him out of the window,
His mother, she sprang from her bed ,
To see the ten somersaults taking him
Over the kitchen shed.

And onto the patch of potatoes,
Beyond the church on the hill.
She saw him a-turning and tumbling,
He's turning and tumbling still.

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