

Dimbie's Dustman Tales

By M. O. TAYLOR

No. 1

DIMBIE had the most beautiful Mummie you ever saw. She was all soft and cuddly, and had no nasty pins to scratch her or hard buttons to hurt her little face when she nestled up close to her. But the most lovely thing about this Mummie of Dimbie's was that she always put her little girl to bed her own self, and—when she was good—told her a beautiful good-night story. So, when Dimbie was tucked up in her white bed, Mummie would say:—

"Pull the little blinds down," which means, of course, "Shut your eyes up tight."

So, now you pretend your are Dimbie and this will be Dimbie's mother talking, and we'll begin.

Little Golden Eye

Once upon a time, my darling, there was a little daisy called Golden Eye. Now, when the Spring Fairy came along and woke all the flowers up, poor, little Golden Eye (who was tinier and weaker than the others) found it very hard to push her little head up through the earth, but when she did get there and saw all her brothers and sisters standing up so straight and looking so bright and pretty, she felt so tired and small that she wished she could creep down into the kind, brown earth again and hide herself from everyone, and she just folded her little, white dress round her and hung her head, and never even saw how warm and bright the sun was or heard the little blades of grass whispering:—

"Grow, grow, grow."

Presently, two busy bees came flying by looking for "pollen." You know that is the soft, yellow stuff that comes off on to our fingers when we touch the lilies, and even on our noses when we smell the honeysuckle. Now, the flowers love the bees, because they know so much about the big world, and fly so far that they can tell them all sorts of wonderful things; and when Golden Eye saw them coming she just peeked through a corner of her little, white dress, and wished ever so hard that they would come and talk to her, and one even did stop and say:—

"See, brother! Here is a new little daisy. Let's stop and tell her about this beautiful world, and perhaps she will give us some honey."

But the other said: "Oh, no! Why, she hasn't any pretty colours on her frock, and isn't even trying to grow like the others. I think she's a very cross thing to hide her face like that."

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Of course this made poor, little Golden Eye feel very sad, because she wasn't really cross, you know, only shy and frightened, so she drew her dress still closer round her and cried and cried.

By-and-by, a big, kind mother bee came along, and when she saw her looking so white and sad she stopped and said:—

"Hello, hello! What silly little flower is this that is hiding her face from our beautiful sun? What's the matter, child? Tell me."

Then Golden Eye told the big, kind mother bee that she was afraid to show her face to the other flowers, because she was so small and tiny, and she was sure they would laugh at her, and she knew she was no use, because even the bees (who are so kind) wouldn't speak to her. And when she had finished the mother bee said:—

"Now, you've been a very, very silly little flower. How can you expect to be big and strong and pretty if you don't try to grow? You know God sent all of you into this world just to make it lovely for those big things called men and women and children, and if the others hid themselves like you are doing, how dull and sad the world would be. Now, just shake out your dress; stand up straight; look at the beautiful sun, and he will soon teach you how to grow; and don't be a foolish little daisy any more," and away she flew.

Then little Golden Eye shyly shook out her dress, lifted her face to the sun, and bravely tried to grow. And when the old sun saw her smiling up so sweetly, he sent down some sunbeams to play with her, and they danced all round her, splashed her face with gold, and left pretty pink footmarks on the edge of her dress. They were so bright and warm and kind that Golden Eye felt quite big and strong, stood up straighter than ever, and grew and grew and grew, and when the sunbeams were thinking of going to bed, the two bees came flying back again, and as they came near Golden Eye they stopped, and this is what they said:—

"There, brother, is the daisy you wouldn't let me speak to. Oh! see how beautiful she is. What a lot of gold she has. Hurry, hurry; our bags are not quite full, and perhaps she will give us some honey."

So they flew to Golden Eye and whispered:—

"Ah! dear daisy, you are so beautiful. Your frock is one of the prettiest in the field, and we know your honey would be very sweet. Will you please give us a little as our bags are not quite full?"

Oh, how proud Golden Eye felt as she opened wide her little cupboard and said:—

"Dear bees, take all you want. I love to feel you need me."

And the bees said:—

"Thank you, sweet little flower."

Then they sat beside her and whispered of all the beautiful things that are in this big world of ours, and when they flew away Golden Eye looked all round at the sky and trees and flowers, and last of all at the dear sun, who was shining a good-night. Then she, too, folded her pretty frock round her, shut her Golden Eye, and felt glad that she had tried to grow.

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"THROUGH FIRE AND THROUGH WATER."

(Continued from page 133.)

Towards evening, in the dim misty light, like a thief, like a panther stalking its prey, the water bounded forth from the forest at the back of the town, and, following a natural depression in the ground, sprang fair at the back of the mission-house. In ten short minutes the basement was full, and everything therein swished about in a churning of liquid mud. "Tables and shelves—tables and shelves." O simpleton! where is your *pons asinorum*? Presently the two seething volumes of water met, beat up against each other for a time in competition, and then, uniting their forces, started in climbing over every obstacle the live long night. And what a night! From the mountains reverberated the rumblings of continual avalanches; from the river came the noise as of one hundred Manchester expresses, ever hurrying, but never getting, by; now and then dogs could be heard howling, and men shouting; lights twinkled here and there over the dark widening flood, as Indians tried to get somewhere in their canoes. boom-bang-crash went the big cottonwood trees as, undermined by the sapping torrent, they pitched forward into the swirl of death; and down over all fell sheets of water, not rain, from the heavens! Isolated in the midst of all this horror of desolation stood the mission-house, and the children fast asleep. "For so He giveth His beloved sleep."

On Monday, the longed-for dawn was announced by our Leghorn chattering in the attic, where the fowls had been bestowed. Good bird—faithful bird! He could not see the brightening sky with the physical eye, but something inside of him, corresponding and responding to the roseate hues, exulted—and he crowed! As for us, we found it hard to be cheerful; neither by faith nor by instinct, could we exult. Our pitiful little attempts at a crow, for the children's sake, resulted only in croaks; for the water was still rising (two inches per hour), and there was enough snow on the mountains to keep up that rate of increase for days to come. It was not only possible, but extremely probable that— But when the mind got thus far, we turned aside from the reflection, and, leaning back into the comfortable fellowship of the Spirit, enjoyed the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Soon after dawn, when the mists and shadows of the night began to dissociate themselves from the surface of the waters, Amos and I (he is our mission helper, and stayed by us), perceived a wavering light approaching from behind the church; it turned out to be William Gogag, in his canoe, our first visitor, coming to enquire after the welfare of the mission party. We had Miss Capper and Miss Sturges with us, ladies who, formerly missionaries in Syria, are in the service of the Indian Department, and had just arrived the week before to take up their duties, the former as Field Matron of the district, and the latter as teacher of the Indian Day School at Aiyansh. We learned from William that most of the Indians had got away safely during the night, and that a small fleet of motor boats were cruising about the village, clearing out the houses and freighting their cargoes up to Gitlakdamiks, where the ground is high and above danger from flood.

The efforts, in nearly every case vain, alas! of the domestic animals to save themselves were agonizing to witness. Between the mission-house and the church there is (or was) a small grassy mead, where the animals loved to congregate in the evenings, where the calves skipped about, and the colts raced each other; and now, from the

various places in the woods where the rising deluge caught them, they came swimming and struggling to the scene of old and happy associations; and there, circling round and round, panting and snorting, try for a bit of solid ground on which to stand. Alas! there was no resting place for their feet, and one after the other they went down to rise no more. Smaller animals, particularly mice, which we were hoping the waters would have destroyed from off the face of the earth, fared better. A potatoe pit, over which an adventurous colony of field mice had established proprietary rights, and which the weasels had annexed as a protectorate, having become inundated with water, the mice took refuge on a floating piece of wood. Two ermines, who had been hunting in the pit, fled for safety also to the same piece of wood. And there they were, all drawn up in a wondering line of perfect amity—eight vermin and two ermine! The dogs of the village, left to their own devices, found safe and even comfortable diggings on floating logs. It was interesting to see them. Some floated down our way, and were incorporated into a small island of flotsam and jetsam which had been formed by the wire fencing of the mission premises.

On the second day of the flood, when the water was over ten feet in the house, a canoe arrived with three men in the afternoon to take us up to Gitlakdamiks. The deluge being still in the ascendant we decided to avail ourselves of this opportunity, and go. Throwing, therefore, our blankets together and an assortment of provisions, pots, pans, etc., we stepped off the verandah into the canoe, and poled and paddled our way along the road and among the trees to Gitlakdamiks. Here we took refuge in the church, which was already filled with people and piles of alms. The chancel, however, was free, and in that we "shook down" for the night. With terra firma once again beneath our feet, came a change of spirit—the envy of those who could afford the luxury of lacrymal comfort, passed away, and the mission party was able to enjoy its supper. Then we gathered around the organ, Miss Gambles playing, and sang hymns, offered our evening prayer, and, rolling ourselves into our respective blankets, with glad and thankful hearts, sought repose. The shrill jabber of excited women, the deep-throated protestations of wearied men, the squalling of children and the crying of babies eventually died down into a low disordered chorus of snorts and snores, some of them original enough to make a man's fortune (as they say) if he could only reproduce them in a conscious state. And over all this incongruously rose the high, deep-shadowed cedar roof, the slender pillars with their graceful arches, resolving their outlines, in the dim cloisteral light, into a vision of Alhambresque beauty as we fell asleep.

Next morning at daybreak (the third day of the flood), the joyful news was passed up to the church that the waters were stayed; and two hours later, a fall of two inches was reported. "Hurrah! the enemy is in full retreat." After breakfast, we decided to return to Aiyansh, while there was yet water enough to float us back over the road by which we came, as it would not be safe to go down by river for some days yet. On arrival at the mission-house we were met at the door by a young heifer, who seemed delighted to see us, and tinkled her bell to give us welcome. She must have done some good swimming—in water over sixteen feet deep and running swiftly—to make good her landing at our front door. And there she was, reciprocating our glad eye, as we rejoiced over one animal saved, at any rate. On the verandah we found a deposit of mud two inches deep, left by the water which had further risen to the extent of six inches and subsided again during our absence. When we saw this we were almost reluct-

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