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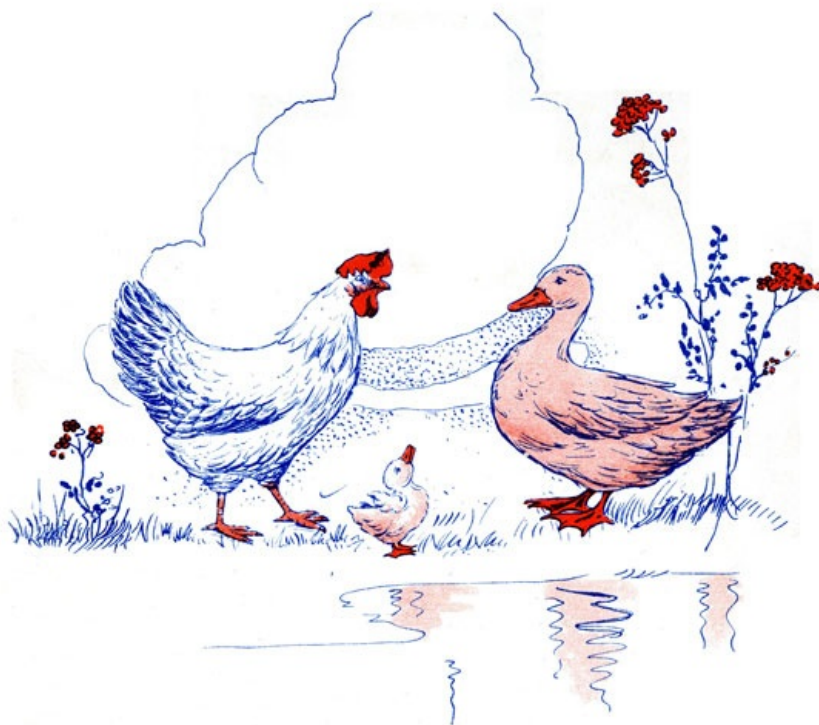
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The Troubles of Biddy



A Pretty Little Story by Isabel Byrum

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"MADE IN USA"

The Troubles of Biddy

"Oh dear," sighed old Biddy, just under her
breath,
"I really am troubled and worried to death!
For months I have thought of a family, dear,
To gladden my heart, and to live with me
here.

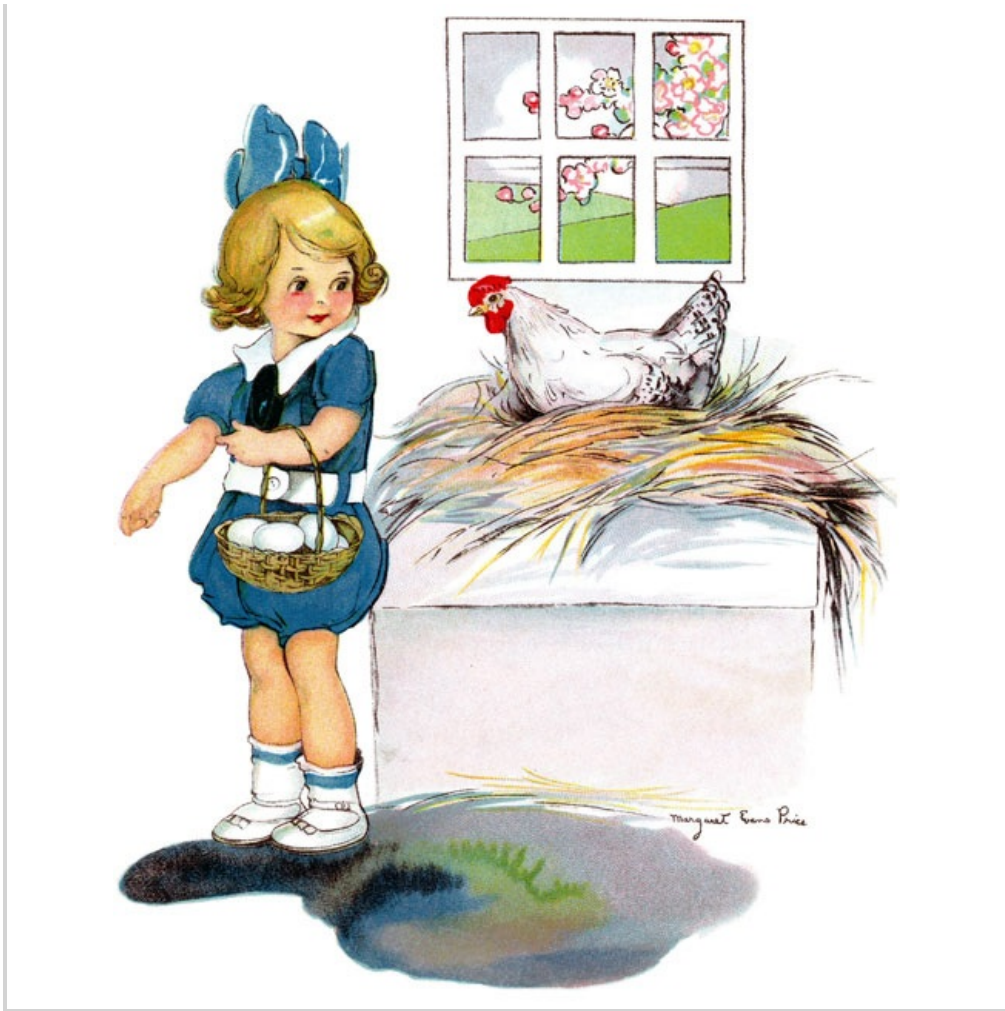
"But daily I find that my plans are upset,
And all I can do is to sit here and fret—
I haven't a sign of an egg in my nest,
Though some I have laid are as good as the
best.

"I scolded last night when my mistress came
near,
But though she was bitten, she seemed not
to fear;

She only said, 'Biddy, what are you about?'
And then through the doorway she simply
passed out.



"I don't understand it; I cannot see why;
For surely to be a good mother I'd try;
Although I would see that they did as I said!"
And Biddy, in sorrow and grief hung her
head.



[Pg 5]



So deep was the longing of poor Biddy's heart,
She felt that with life she was ready to part;

But glancing about in her trouble and pain
She saw that her mistress was coming
again;

And noting the basket she held in her hand
Old Biddy thought quickly "she can't
understand,"
And "what is she doing?" exclaimed in surprise;
For out of the nest Biddy felt herself rise.

As Biddy stood resting her poor weary legs,
She saw that the basket contained shining
eggs;
And mistress with care placed them all in the
nest
For Biddy to snuggle beneath her warm
breast.

Now Biddy was happy; her burden was gone,
Her troubles had vanished, she felt she had
none:
And, planning away in her little straw bed,
No thoughts of complaining came into her
head.





She looked from the window each morning at
 dawn,
 And pictures of rapture were constantly
 drawn,
 For, out on the lawn near a little old shed,
 Were dishes and troughs where the
 chickens were fed.

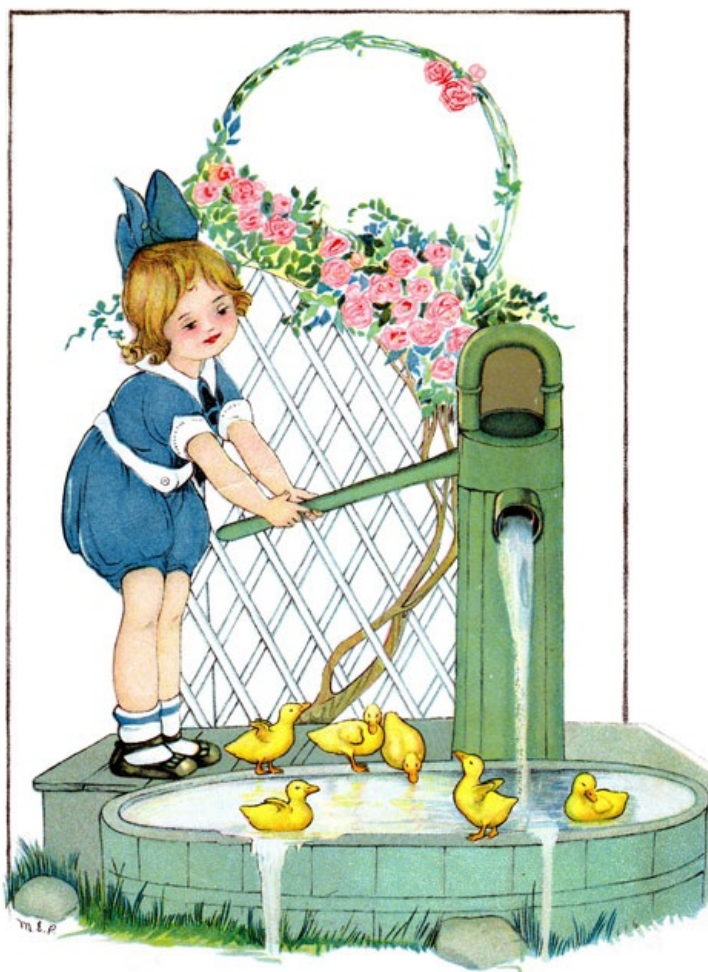
And Biddy thought wisely, "These things I shall
 use;
 The largest and neatest are what I shall
 choose."
 But never a thought did this wise mother take
 Of danger, or trouble, in St. Mary's lake.

How happy she was when the first sounds were
 heard,
 And the bright downy heads her soft
 feathers stirred!
 "But what is the matter with each little nose?"
 She said in amazement, "And what ails
 their toes?"

"They are not like chickens at all, I am sure!
 I wonder whatever such strange things will
 cure?"
 And Biddy once more was in trouble most deep;
 For none of her children could really say
 peep.



[Pg 9]



"I think that my babes for a walk ought to go;"
One morning said Biddy, "I'll lead them just

so;
I'll watch every minute lest danger arise:
For they'll not be safe when from under my
eyes."

At the word every downy ball hustled about,
And ere Biddy knew it, they all had jumped
out
Of the nest, and were darting about in the sun,
For bugs, and for grass blades, and simply
for fun.

Biddy watched for a time and then softly said,
"I ought to be dusting my feathers and
head;"
So off to the roadside she hastily went,
And there in the soft sand, a few moments
spent.

[Pg 10]





What was it made Biddy's heart quiver and
 leap?
 It wasn't the sound of a young chicken's
 peep—
 But the splashing of water and flutt'ring of
 wings—
 And leaving the road side she screamed,
 "Of all things!"

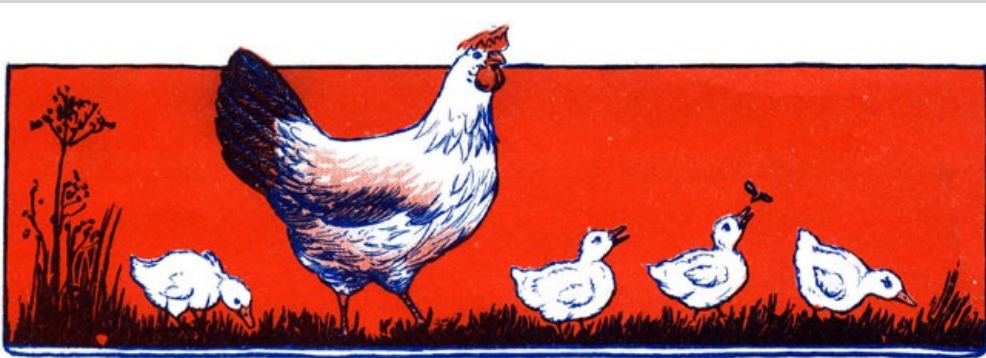
Her babies were all in the watering trough,
 Regardless of sickness, disease, and of
 cough.
 "Oh dear," cried poor Biddy, "What now shall I
 do?
 My children will drown and before my eyes
 too!"

And mistress cried, "Biddy, now please don't you
 fear,
 They simply *love* water, and oh! aren't they
 dear?
 I'll keep them all safe, so Biddy go 'way!
 And let your poor children have freedom to
 play."



Each day in the trough and the puddles they
played
And off where the grass was the deepest
they stayed
While Biddy would search for them, clucking
for hours
Over the barnyard and in 'mong the
flowers.

The little log barn was a refuge at night
Where often poor Biddy for courage would
fight;
And there, with her feathers above her young
brood,
She tried to instruct them in ways to be
good.



Where apples were juicy and mellow, one day,
These ten naughty children were gathered
to play,
When suddenly one of them, leading the band,
Said, "Come, let us travel," and there a trip
planned.

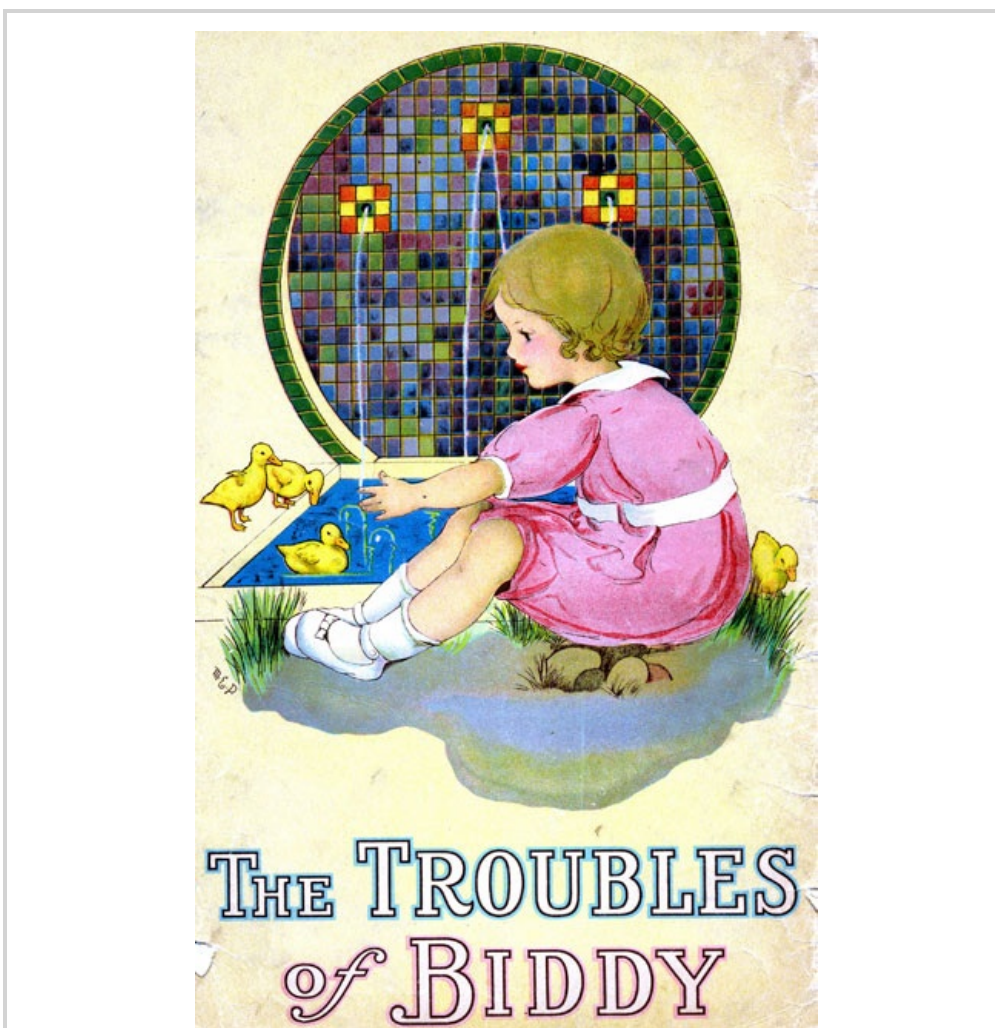
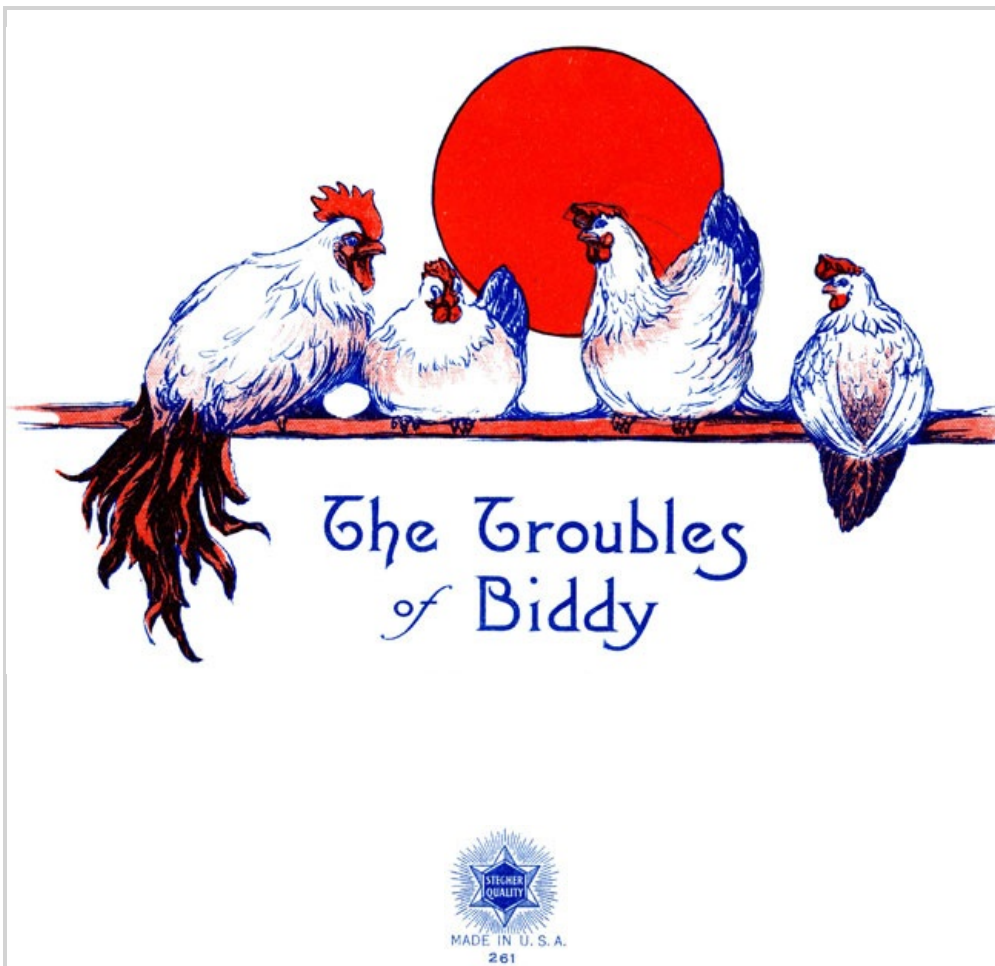
So off they all went toward the shed and the
pump,
Turning out now and then for a log or a
stump,
And down the steep hill where the clover
bloomed bright
The little band wandered in perfect delight.

The moment that Biddy discovered the plot
She rushed in confusion and soon reached
the spot;
"Oh children, be careful!" she screamed in
alarm;
"In the lake I'm sure you will meet with
some harm!"

But to cry, and protest, and urge them to come
Seemed all of no use, for they would not go
home.
And Biddy exclaimed to herself in disgust,
"To stand this I cannot, and leave them I
must!"

The evening shades gathered that night in the
sky;
The wind sung most softly a sweet lula-by;
But Biddy had left her dear children alone:
She found they were ducklings, and such
could not own.

The End



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