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A Story from Lillian Crewe Walsh story of Dicky Melbourne When I was a little girl I used to like to listen to Jimmy Carroll telling stories, especially this one: Once upon a time, not in my time nor in your time, there lived a little man named Dicky Melbourne. Dicky was a good worker and did all he could for his pretty wife whom he loved dearly. One day when Dicky went home she was in bed crying. "My dear, what's the matter? "Are you sick?" cried Dicky. "Oh yes my darling. Whatever will you do when I am gone. The doctor says only a bottle of water from fair Absolem will cure me. Oh dear oh dear, what shall we do?" "Do not cry," says Dicky. "I shall go to fair Absolem and get the water and you will be better. I shall get the water or die in the attempt. I would not live without you." Now in fair Absolem were all manner of wild beasts, and it was certain death to venture in the forest where the famous waters were, but next morning at daylight Dicky kissed his wife who begged him to stay home, and taking a large bottle, set out on his jour? ney. He had not gone far when he met an old friend, Paddy the pedlar. "Hi there," he called to Dicky, "where be ye goin' so early?" Dicky told him. "My wife is sick, and only a bottle of wa? ter from fair Absolem will cure her. I'm going to fetch it." "Now then," says Paddy, "get up and away. I shall put thee in the light of a few things. When you're at work the parson goes courtin' your wife. Yes she does. This is a plot to get rid of thee." "Oh no," cried Dicky, "my sweet wife loves me. 'Deed she do." "Now now," said Paddy, "you listen to me. You're my friend. We shall stay here. I'll drive the horse and wagon in the woods and we shall hide by the side of the road. If we see the parson comin' we shall know he is going towards your house. If he does, we shall make our plans and if I have told thee wrong, I shall go to fair Absolem for the water myself." Sure enough, two hours later the parson went gayly by towards Dicky's house. "Now then," said Paddy, "we shall wait un? til dark. Then I'll dip the old knapsack in the river and tie thee up in it, and I'll drive up to your place and we shall what's goin' on. Yes we shall." Dicky agreed, and when they got to Dicky's place Paddy got out and knocked on the door. "I saw your light Mrs. Melbourne, and know? ing how kind-hearted you are I thought you might let me dry my knapsack by your fire. I had the misfortune, I did, to get it wet in the river." "Come right in Paddy. Come right in. We're just havin' a little celebration. We'll be glad to have ye have a glass of beer, now won't ye?" Paddy put the knapsack down and sat beside it, and Dicky couldn't see, but...he could hear what was going on. "Now," says Mrs. Melbourne, "I shall sing a little song. "Little Dicky Melbourne a long journey has gone. To fetch me some water from fair Absolem, God grant him long journey, may he never return. And it's aye for a drop of more ale. It's aye for a drop of more ale. "Now parson you must sing something," "Well," he said, "preaching is really more to my fancy, but I'll try to do my best." He cleared his throat. (She clears hers in imitation of the parson.) "Little Dicky Melbourne, how little do you think I'm eatin' your vittals and I'm drinking your drink, And if God spares my love I shall marry your wife, STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 48