A WEEK AT THE MANOR FARM

BY L. T.

GATHERING WILD FLOWERS.

A WEEK

AT

THE MANOR FARM.

By the author of
"Rays of Starlight" and "Half-Hours by the Sea."

THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

1880.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

A Week at the Manor Farm.

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL OF VISITORS.

IT was a warm, bright day of the early summer, the climbing rose-tree that covered a great part of the old farm-house was in full bloom, and hanging down in masses of snowy whiteness, tempting the merry children to bury their rosy faces in the fragrant clusters.

But on the day that our story begins the children were intent upon something else than the roses, something that seemed to have a great interest for them. They have been counting the days until last night, when as they went to bed they said, "Only this one night now." Then they went to sleep, and when they woke in the morning

the sun was shining in through their window. But when one of them tumbled out of bed, and ran to this same window to see if any one was moving in the farm-yard, she found that all was quite still and quiet there, so they knew that it must be very early yet. Then there comes a long romping game from one bed to the other, for the large room has plenty of space in it, and three little girls are sleeping here, or rather they have been, for they are wide awake now.

Cherry and Daisy and Lizzie, as we shall call them, have been listening for the sounds downstairs that tell them the servant has gone down, and after a good many leaps and tumbles in between, they are dressed at last, and ready to run downstairs, and out on the grass-plat, where they play till breakfast is ready.

How very slowly the time seemed to go, and impatient little Daisy thinks twelve o'clock will never come; but at last she and Cherry have their best white pinafores put on, and their garden hats, and are soon running down a narrow path that leads through the large and pleasant kitchen garden down to the road that passes through the village.

Perhaps some of my little readers are also

wanting to know why Cherry and Daisy are so eager to get down to the gate. Well, the secret of the bustle and stir at the farm is just this. In London live an Uncle and Aunt of our Manor Farm little ones, and as they have some children too, they have promised to bring down one of their little girls to stay for a week, and then our Daisy is to go back with her for a holiday, to see London for the first time. Of course it is quite a grand event to a little girl of eight years old, as Daisy is, and as Uncle is coming and cousin Will too, to stay all day, the kind mother and her servant have been very busy.

The other children, who were not quite old enough to understand what it all meant, were nevertheless pleased with the stir around them, for there were several others besides those whom we have already seen. There was their brother Will, the eldest of the family, who was away at school all day, then our three little friends, and their brother Arlie, and baby May.

These little ones could make such a noise as only those would believe who have heard what boys and girls can do.

Now after telling you all this we will go back to the gate at the bottom of the kitchen garden, and see what Cherry and Daisy are

doing there. They have had a long time to wait, and many a time has naughty little Daisy run out in the road to look, and see if she can get the first glimpse of their visitors. But now she and her sister have perched themselves upon the top bar of the gate, and as they listen they hear at last the sound of wheels coming quickly towards them, then they see the horse's head as it turns the corner, and there is their Uncle, and Will, and Connie beside him, in the large family dog-cart.

When their uncle sees the little girls he stops the horse to speak to them, and lays his whip round their necks as though he were going to flog them, but so gently they only laugh at him. Then after a word to each of them he gives the reins a shake and off trots the horse with his load round to the front door.

Down jump Cherry and Daisy from their hard seat, and are soon scampering up the path again to meet the others, but as it is some distance round to the drive, they are in plenty of time to get there before their friends in the trap, and thus see them all get down.

By this time their mother and Arlie and baby May are waiting on the grass-plat to meet them. Then there is such a buzz of

voices, and shaking of hands, and kissing, as if uncles and cousins had never met before. Now the father comes out, and Will takes his namesake cousin off to shew him his rabbits, and Daisy wants Connie to come too, but the kind mother sees her little niece is dusty and tired, and Cherry is told to take her upstairs and help her undress and make her fresh and cool before dinner. So Daisy is forced to give up the rabbits, but instead of doing so in a gentle, kind way, she pouts and looks black and cross, and says it is a shame, and behaves very badly. It is a good thing her kind mother is too busy to notice her, or else she would be sad to see how naughty her little girl is. Poor little Daisy had not learnt yet that the only way to be happy is to be obedient. She has no idea that it is her own fault that she is so often in trouble; and she often thinks that Cherry seems to get along much better than she does, though she does not at all know why.

I think I know how it is. Cherry has listened to the hymns her mother teaches them, and to her teacher at the Sunday School, and she knows that God sees and hears them always, and so she tries to do as she is told, and thus be an obedient girl.

Daisy knows nothing of all this yet. She

hears it all, it is true, the same as her sister, but it has never gone to her heart. She has no idea that Jesus the Lord loves her. I think if she had it might perhaps have been different, but as it is Daisy gets naughty and is often punished. I hope all my little friends know that she might have had a Friend who was strong enough to save her from her wilful ways: the same gentle, loving Saviour who took little children up in His arms and blessed them, when He was down here. And as He took notice of little children then, and told His disciples to let them come to Him, so is He wanting little children to come to Him to-day.

But perhaps some of you will say, "We cannot see or hear the Lord Jesus now, as the children could then." No! I know you are not able to look at Him with your eyes, as Daisy looked at her uncle and cousins, but then there is just this to think of, if you cannot see or hear the Lord Jesus, He sees and hears you always. And He is always close to you, so that you can speak to Him wherever you may be, and He will be quite sure to hear you. Now before I tell you any more of our friends at the farm, I want you all to think of three little words:

GOD IS LOVE.

Now think of those words until you can say them over to yourself without looking at them, and do not forget that this love is for you. We know it is true, for it is because God loved us that He gave His Son the Lord Jesus to die for us, so that God might be able to forgive us, and that is why I want you all to learn of Him and love Him too.

CHAPTER II.

ROUND THE MEADOWS.

AS soon as dinner was over, and all the hungry little mouths were ready to eat the last ripe cherries of the dessert, that perhaps they thought a great deal better than meat, a move was made from the pleasant sitting-room. The uncles went into the parlour for a quiet time, and the young ones ran off to the garden; and as cousin Will would not be here to-morrow, it was thought the best thing to do was to go round the meadows at once. So the little girls go and get their hats and take baby May to mother, as she is not big enough to go so far, and then they all start up the beautiful fruit garden that divides the house from the meadows beyond.

First of all, Connie is shewn the bright sparkling little stream that runs between high banks quite through the garden. A

THE SPARKLING STREAM.

high black fence is on the other side of the stream, and shews that the fields beyond belong to some one else, and are not a part of Manor Farm. Now the children think this stream one of the nicest things in the place; the water ripples along over the pebbles, and there are such pretty little minnows in it, and such splendid waving ferns on the banks, and such primroses in the spring-time as they never see anywhere else.

The path lies by the stream right up through the apple and pear trees, past the large currant and gooseberry bushes, right on to the meadows. But at the place where the garden ends the stream makes a sudden bend, and so there is a narrow little wooden bridge across it, and this has to be passed before the children can get out into the pleasant meadows.

As Connie was a little London girl, she was rather afraid at the idea of going across the tiny bridge with no rail to hold by, so Will goes over and then holds out his long arm to her and helps her across, and in a moment she is standing "Ankle-deep in English grass," for as yet this meadow has not been touched by the mowers; so instead of rushing about all over it they keep to the little track that winds along to the next

meadow. But I think no child would ever believe that all those lovely wild flowers that were growing there, could be made save by some One who loved us. Why need there be such beautiful colours and forms? The hay would be as good without the bright pink and white silene, or the scarlet sorrel, or the yellow slipper flower, and a host of others. But if all had been just green grass, lovely as that is, we should not have known the tender care of our God, who thinks even of giving us joy and pleasure in the very tiniest daisy or butter-cup that you see in the meadows. And as Connie saw the trailing wild-rose in the hedge, with its pretty pink and white blossoms, how could she help wanting some?

Then they came to a huge cluster of the starry ox-eye daisy, and then some other lovely blossoms, so at last they just walk along picking flower after flower until their hands are full. Every one of those bright blossoms was formed and coloured by God. Now I think that some of you may be able to tell me a verse that shews us this: "If God so clothe the grass of the field." These words were said by the Lord Jesus Himself when down here, to make us sure that as the love of God even took care

of the flowers, how much more would He take of those who trust Him: and little children can do this.

Some time in the Spring, I think, a little girl I knew had to go by train to a large town, and she had to go alone. Now Lizzie was a little frightened when she found herself among strangers, and began to think how should she know where to get out; for as she had very seldom been by train, she could not tell at first what the porters said, when they shouted out the names of the stations. Now what do you think Lizzie did? She loved the Lord Jesus because she knew He loved her, and had taken all her sins away; so she knew He would take care of her, and she just asked Him to do so as she sat in the train, then she did not feel at all afraid any more.

When they reached the town she knew it at once and got out quite safely, not at all frightened at having to go back alone. If Connie and her cousins had known that the same One who made all the waving grass and flowers loved them and wanted them to think of Him and know what He had done for them, I think they would have been even much happier than they were.

After they had picked as many of the wild flowers as they liked, they all got across

a high stile into the next meadow, and as the grass here had been cut, they could lie down under the shade of some fine large elm trees that were growing round a large pond in one corner of the meadow. How pleasant it was to lie there in the shade, with the hum of the bees, and the song of the birds sounding on every side of them.

Funny little green grasshoppers sometimes made a mistake and hopped on to their hands and faces instead of the grass. Then the boys climb up the tree and peep down at the girls on the grass beneath, and find some nests in the thick branches. But the nests are empty, the birds are flown, and so they are not tempted to take the pretty blue-speckled eggs that were there a few weeks ago. But the children have to get home in time for an early tea, before Uncle and Will start for their homeward drive to London ; so at last they leave the trees and go back into the uncut meadow again, not the same way that they came though, but round the other side of the meadow.

All along this side grow a great many beautiful oak trees, some of the branches of which spread an immense distance from the trunk.

Here they get a splendid swing, and how do you think they manage it ? Will gives a

leap high in the air, catches one of the branches, and grasping it in his hands, gives one spring, and the branch sways from side to side carrying him with it. Then he holds it while the others grasp it, and gives them a little push, now they are soon flying through the air as far as the great old branch will take them.

They like this kind of swing better than the proper one of rope that they have fixed up at home. After they have all had as many swings as they wish for, they run off quickly, for it is getting late. But they have not gone far before they hear a shrill voice calling them, and looking across to the garden, they see Alice the servant, who has been sent to call them in to tea; so now there is a real race home.

Will and his cousin are soon far before our little girls, but they all pass over the bridge, and Connie is not afraid this time, then once more they pass through the fruit trees, where ripe gooseberries look very tempting to hot and thirsty children. It is just at such times as this that they need to think of another little text that I will tell you—"Thou God seest me." Now we know that children are not often allowed to pick the fruit in their parents' garden just when they like, though I know that they

would much like to do so. Do you remember I asked you in our last chapter to think of the words "God is Love"? Well, now I have another text for you, and I want you all to learn it, for it may help you the next time you are tempted to do what is not right. Just think, then, that God is looking at you; the God who loves you.

I do not know whether Daisy or Cherry thought of these words then, for they were all in a great hurry to get indoors; their father never liked any of them to be late at meals, so they left all their flowers in the cool, large kitchen as they passed through, and it was not long before they found out that bread-and-butter and cake seemed nicer than usual after their long afternoon in the meadows.

But even hungry and thirsty little ones are satisfied at last, and when their Uncle and Willie are ready to start home, they all gathered round the gate to see the last of their London friends; and Connie gives a last kiss, and her father tells her to get strong, and brown, before she goes home. Then the horse begins to move, and soon sets off at a good trot, and a minute more they are out of sight.

Before very long mother puts baby May in her pretty cot, and soon the little white-

robed figures are kneeling at mother's knee, and then good-night is said, and sleepy eyes forget to look even at their new little visitor, and before the dusk grows into darkness, both she and her cousins are fast asleep in the same old room looking over the farm-yard, where we first saw the eager little ones in the early morning.

While they are asleep we will take a look at the farm-house, for it is not at all like most farm-houses that we see in country places, being very much larger, and built in a different style, too. It looks like a place that has a story belonging to it, and in our next chapter we may, perhaps, find this out. The house stands back a long way from the road and is surrounded by its fields and gardens, and on one side lies the farm-yard, with its stabling and farm-buildings, and large rick-yards with stacks of sweet-smelling hay.

Such a pretty village as the farm-house was in, is not often seen so near a large city, for the farm was not more than twenty miles from London with its five millions of people. But no one would have known that when they were in the quiet meadows with the waving grass all round them, and the birds seeing which could sing the loudest in the trees overhead, and where the sky

was free from smoky clouds, and the sunshine lit up the meadows with warmth and light, or the moon looks down as it does now.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN GOOD QUEEN BESS WAS REIGNING.

WHAT a long time ago! some of you say. Why it is more than two hundred years ago! I believe it is nearly three hundred; but I never can quite remember my Kings and Queens, though we learn enough of them at school.

Well! little friends, when you are a few years older you will be glad that you were taught to know the dates when these old monarchs reigned, though you do make some mistakes now. But, as you know Queen Elizabeth lived a very long time ago, I had better tell you perhaps just when it was, and then you will know when the Manor House was built, that is now called a farm. It was as long ago as the year 1558, when Elizabeth sat under the great tree at Hatfield, where she first heard of the death of her cruel sister Mary, and knew that she herself was queen of all England.

There under that tree, that is still shewn

to the curious visitor at Hatfield, Queen Bess fell on her knees and said aloud, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." And long after this, when she was settled in her grand home; and when all the English people owned her as queen, she had these words stamped on the money that was coined. She might well do this, for Queen Mary was so cruel, that while she lived every one who dared to have a Bible in his house was liable to be burnt to death for it, and a great many were burnt.

I have never forgotten being taken, when I was only a few years old, to the place where a number of poor people had been burnt alive, and where they shewed me the stones still burnt black, and the great rings in the posts where the poor creatures had been chained. I do not think I shall ever forget it, and it has helped me much to be thankful that no one in our country now is afraid to have a Bible if he wishes.

Well! It was thought that Manor Farm was built in the days when Queen Elizabeth had beef and ale for breakfast, before tea or coffee had made their way from China and Mocha. The house had large rooms, and large windows with tiny panes of glass, also long window-sills.

The ceilings were rather low, but there were no gas-fittings hanging from them, so it did not much matter. And there were beautiful oak carvings over the mantel-pieces, and some of the large fireplaces were beautifully inlaid with very old Dutch tiles. There were queer three-cornered cupboards, and strange doorways opening into large closets full of shelves even in the parlours, while upstairs a long corridor ran along the rooms in the middle of the house, and then at one end of this there was a sliding door at the side where it only looked like a massive wooden wall. No one could see that it was a door, for there was no handle or lock to say so, at least not one that could be seen. But when any one who knew the secret wanted to get through this hidden door, they had to push hard on the panel that had deep lines rising up from the flat surface, and the doorway would slowly open as the wall or panel slipped along in a hidden groove at the top and bottom.

When the children first found this out it was very strange and wonderful to them, and they were rather timid, yet they liked to push back the door and peep into the great room beyond. As they grew older they used to make a sort of playroom of it, as it was not generally used. Quaint

indeed was this old room with its heavy black carving and funny old fireplace, and the staircase at one end of it shut off by another low doorway.

This staircase led down to the kitchen, so most likely the upper room was meant for servants. In the kitchen there was no grate as we have them now, but a very large open chimney, and a broad, long hearth beneath, with strange cooking irons at each side of the hearth, that were called dog-irons.

I think, however, this was not used, as a modern range had been put in the inner kitchen, that was thought more comfortable than this great old room, where perhaps barons of beef used to be roasted on spits turned by dogs. But as it was a curious place it was left as it had been many years before. Then outside the house there were many pointed gables and great beams of oak crossed in many ways over the upper stories as a kind of outside ornaments. Carved work hung down from the pointed roof round the long windows and looked very nice against the white walls. There was the middle part of the house, with its pointed gable, and then a wing, as it is called at each end, and these were each pointed in the same way.

A pleasant house it was, and must have been built by some one who did his work well, to last so long. The oak carving was as perfect as if only just fresh from the carver's hand. This was the place where our little girls lived, and as there were large gardens and fields all round it, the little ones had plenty of room to run about in sweet country air, and learn all manner of things about birds, animals and insects, of which the poor city children know very little.

At the back of the house was a large fruit garden, where there were long rows of gooseberry trees and raspberry and many other fruits, and in the shady meadow beyond lived the young colts that the children were so fond of. And very much they liked to see them when the man began to "break them in," as they called it.

Do you know what this means, I wonder! I think I must tell you what Connie and her cousins would see if they went down to the meadow at the right time.

There were two colts that the children often patted and played with, one was of a bright brown colour; and the other a very dark grey. Both were as gentle and good as young horses could be, and Daisy had had more than one ride on them.

One day she was in the garden, at the bottom, and she saw a man come into the field holding the colt by the long halter that was looped up yard after yard on his other arm; he went out a good way into the meadow, where there was a clear space all round them, and then he began to make the beautiful colt trot round and round in a circle, close to him at first, but little by little he slipped the loops of the halter off his arm, and made the colt go round a larger and larger circle till he was nearly at the very limit of the long halter. He never let the colt stand still, or gallop, but made it trot gently and evenly round and round, until it could do it quite easily. Then he drew the halter in, in the same way that he had let it out, until the gentle little horse was trotting round quite close to him.

He then soon put his hand on the arched glossy neck that had never yet been curbed by bit or bridle, and patted and stroked it to let the colt know he had done his work well; then he slipped off the halter, and the colt was quickly galloping off, with his long main and tail streaming in the wind, to the other side of the meadow, where his companions were lying in the shade of the old oak trees that went all round that side of it.

The colt had been having a lesson; just

the same as we have. We need to be broken in to learn to do as we are told, and I am quite sure that the colt might teach us to do our lessons well and patiently.

Another time after this, one of the young horses was brought into a field where there was a high hedge and wide ditch on the other side of it. Instead of a halter now the man had a very long pair of reins, and the bit and bridle were on the horse's head. The man led the poor colt up to the ditch and let him look at it, then he made him go back some distance, and trot very fast up to the hedge and leap right over the ditch and the hedge into the meadow beyond. At first the poor colt was frightened and stopped short at the water, but then the long whip came sharply down on his neck and made him start and quiver ; but after a few failures and one fall into the ditch he found it was not so very hard, and I suppose made up his mind to really try, and before long he was going over the ditch and hedge like a bird, and there was no more trouble with him.

You will come to things at times that your teachers tell you must be done, or that your parents wish, that will seem as hard to you as the leap to the colt, and when you do, you can think of him, and try hard as he did, and you will be just as able to do your

hard task as he was. Then there is another thing, horses are very unlike us, though they may often teach us a lesson by their docility. But we have a mind to think with, and we can understand *why* we have to learn, and do hard things. And even little children, if they have heard of the God who so loves them, and have learnt to trust His Son as the One who died for them, have a Friend to go to in all their troubles. When they pray to Him He likes them to ask Him for *all* they need. You must learn to tell the Lord everything if you do belong to Him, and you will find how happy it is to do so. If you have anything come to you that makes you feel glad and happy, then tell the Lord that, and thank Him for it; for all good things are sent by Him, though they may come to us through others: as the bread and fishes that He fed the people in the wilderness with were really from Him, though it was the hands of the disciples that gave them into theirs.

Thus when you are in any trouble, no matter what, tell the Lord the first thing, and I am sure you will never be sorry if you get into the habit of doing this.

I once heard of a poor working woman who had to carry home washing from the laundry, and as she had very little time for herself,

either to read her Bible or pray, she thought it would be a great help to make a rule of speaking to the Lord in prayer as she went along the street. This she found did help her, for the journeys did not seem so long, and it kept her from being taken up with her troubles. So as you do your work, and perhaps come to a hard lesson or sum, just try asking the Lord to help you, if it is only a few words like, "Lord do help me now to do this."

I am glad to know that there are many girls, and boys too, who know what it is to seek for this power from above, and to get it, and the more they know of it, the more they trust the One who watches to help all those who come to Him, and never turns one away.

CHAPTER IV.

LUNCHEON OUT OF DOORS.

THE next morning the sun had been shining a long time before our little girls awoke and rubbed their sleepy eyes, almost forgetting for a while that their little visitor was in the cosy bed that stood on the other side of the room.

But after a little time they manage to find out that Connie is awake too, and then they soon get into a merry chat that lasts until Alice comes to help them dress.

When they run down the wide staircase into the cheerful sitting room, they find their breakfast waiting for them. So Cherry, her sister, Connie and Arlie have their breakfast alone. For their father and mother have theirs much earlier, and baby May is not old enough to sit up to table yet.

The basins of sweet, rich bread and milk soon occupy hands and mouths, and the

coffee and home-made bread and butter Connie thinks very good indeed. But I do not at all expect any of them really thought of thanking the One who was giving them all these good things, and it may be that my little readers have been like them in this.

We are all like it until we learn better; but when we find out that God—the great God who made this world—has thought of us, and of our food, and all that we need, it makes everything seem better than it did before, and we love to thank Him for it.

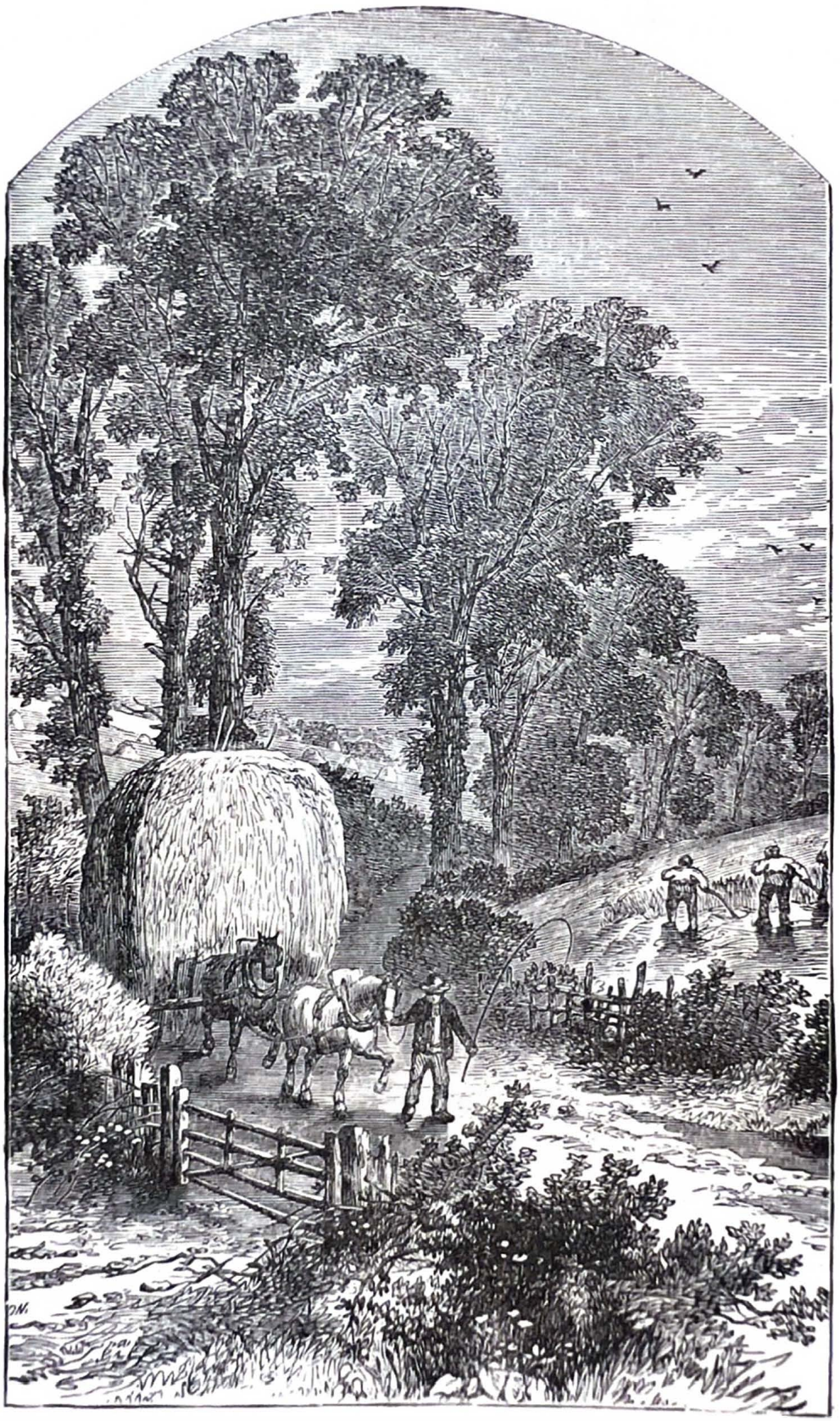
It is God who gives us every good thing, just as really as when the Lord Jesus was down here and the poor people around him were tired and hungry; He made them sit down on the green grass, and then took the loaves and broke them in pieces and gave to His disciples to give to the hungry people, and children. He thought of the little children then, for it speaks of them in the beautiful story of the loaves and fishes. The Lord is just the same to-day as he was then, so any little children who read this may be quite sure that He knows all about them and will take care of them if they will let Him.

Daisy and the other children did not know much about this then, although they learned it long after.

Well, after breakfast they talk over what they shall do first, and at last they think of going to see if the mowers have begun to cut the grass in the Home meadow, where they went yesterday. But before they get half way up the garden path, to their great joy they hear the pleasant sound of the mowers sharpening their long scythes. They run therefore up the garden, and when they reach the meadow-gate, there, close to it, are the mowers.

Four strong sun-burnt men, who are sending their sharp scythes in even sweeps through the flowery grass, that falls so softly and sadly, as it were, down on the ground to die. But sorry as Daisy sometimes felt to see the pretty flowers cut down, she and her sister both knew that without the hay all the cows and horses could hardly live through the long winter. So it was when cut down and withered, or dead as we call it, that the flowers and grass that look so beautiful when growing, are of the greatest use.

But the mowers have now finished the piece by the gate, and sit down on the bank to have their breakfast. Their



CARRYING THE HAY.

baskets are opened, the red handkerchiefs untied, and the mowers are soon as busily eating as the children were not long before. They have been hard at work ever since the sun rose, and the fresh morning air, together with their work, gives them such an appetite that the slices of bread and cheese they take out of the red handkerchiefs are very soon disposed of.

The children did not however stay to see that, for as they cannot run about in the hayfield yet, they think of a great many other things to shew their cousin. She has not seen the farmyard, and Cherry wants to take her where the gentle little calves are waiting for breakfast, as every one else has been having theirs.

Did any of my little readers ever see the pretty sight that Connie was now shewn—that of calves being fed by hand with milk and linseed? Pretty little red and white things some of these calves were, but others were Alderney calves, and these were golden brown and black, with skins like silk, and heads like young fawns, with such gentle great brown eyes. And as soon as they hear the sound of the man coming with the pails of warm milk for them they crowd round him, and as only two at a time can be fed, they soon bury their

heads in the pails, now and then looking up with their large grave eyes, as if to say they liked the sweet milk; and then quickly putting their noses back into the pails and not lifting them again until every drop is gone, and the pails licked quite clean with their long tongues.

The little girls dearly like to see the calves fed, and better still to hold one of the pails, and feel how soft is the little head so close to their hands now. But the man has soon done here, and the last little calf has tried in vain to get any more out of the pail that he has emptied, and they are all left to lie down and sleep on the nice clean straw in their stall.

Some mornings, when the hay is all cut, the calves are turned out in the meadows, and then it is with great glee that the children see how they all scamper up the meadow as soon as they hear the rattle of the handles on the tin pails from which they are fed.

And the calves quickly get to know the children, and like them to stroke their pretty soft heads or pat their sides, and even rub their noses on the children's hands, and lick them with their warm tongues, and like sometimes to follow them about, as the little girls go searching for ferns or

forget-me-nots. Sometimes when they catch sight of the farmer quite at the other end of the field, one calf will set off to go to him, and then all the others follow, dashing along as fast as they can gallop, with their tails in the air, till they get to their master.

After the calves' breakfast is finished Connie is taken to look for hens' eggs. Now there is a very nice chicken house, with rows of nests for the hens, and if they were well-behaved chickens they would always be content with their proper house.

But the truth is chickens like to ramble off, and go where they please—like some little people we all know—and so the eggs are very often found in all kinds of queer out-of-the-way places. And oh! the delight of finding a nest in some odd corner of the great barn, with perhaps eight or ten brown eggs in it. Once indeed, as Cherry tells Connie, a hen laid away in the meadows for a long time, and no one could find the nest. At last one day the hen was found, and with her a whole lot of the prettiest little chickens—fluffy, downy little creatures, some golden coloured, some black, but all as strong and happy as though they had been bornin the chicken house, instead of coming to surprise every one from under a hedge.

All this time the children are looking for eggs, but they only find one or two, in the corner of the hay-loft. And then they have a romp among the sweet-smelling trusses of hay, that are piled up to the very top of the loft, and fine fun they think it to climb to the top of the highest truss, and then slip down again, quite safely, because they only fall on the hay that covers the floor. And Daisy tells Connie how she sometimes comes here to see her brother Will put the hay down for the cows, and she shews her cousin the places cut in the floor of the loft, and looking down, Connie sees that there is a kind of rack below to catch the hay put down through these holes, and at night a cow comes to each rack ; for they are over the cowhouse, Connie finds, and the hay that is put down into the racks is soon munched up by the great mouths of the cows, as they each stand so quietly to be milked.

The cowhouse is empty now, and the cows all out in the meadows, not to be brought home until evening. So the children can look all around the house and see how much care is taken of the cows.

But hark! some one is calling "Cherry, Cherry!" and the little girl soon knows it is her mother's voice, who is calling her to

take little Arlie with them. Mother is very often busy, for twice every week there is butter to be made; and no hands but her own are ever allowed to touch it.

Then in haymaking time there are heaps of bread and cheese to be got ready twice or three times a day for the hay-makers. For at Manor Farm they give the men something to eat in between their usual meals, as the farmer thinks they must need plenty of food if they work all day in the blazing sun. So indoors at the farm they are not often able to be idle.

When little Arlie comes out with the children they all go into the rick-yard, where there are famous places to play in between the great stacks of hay that nearly fill the yard.

The little girls are glad to find a heap of straw left there by thatchers, that makes a nice soft seat for them all to sit on, while Arlie runs about and plays for a little time, till his sisters have had a rest after their long morning of rambling about.

All at once Daisy runs off, not staying to tell the others where she is going—she runs through the rick-yard, then crosses the farm-yard, runs over the grass-plat and sees her mother just going in at the back door. So Daisy runs up, and now we see

what she wants, for she is begging for some biscuits for luncheon.

Now Daisy and Cherry both go to school, only it is now their midsummer holidays. And perhaps her mother thinks Daisy may be forgetting her lessons, for she tells her little girl that if she can spell the word *biscuit*, she shall have what she has asked for.

"Oh yes, I can spell it," Daisy thinks, and at once begins, "*biskit*."

"No, no, that will never do," says her mother gravely; so Daisy stops and thinks this time, and then spells it slowly, "*biscuit*."

"Ah, that's better," and then Daisy gets the biscuits she asked for.

But the little girl thinks that currants and gooseberries would taste very good out in the rick-yard, and milk would be nice, too, for the sun is so hot, and they do get *so* thirsty. The end of it is that Daisy soon has a large cabbage-leaf full of the big, ripe, sweet gooseberries, and bunches of bright red, and white currants, for there were all kinds of currants in their fruit garden. Then the biscuits are put on the top, and with the fruit in one hand, and a mug of milk in the other, off trots Daisy, as proud of her luncheon as can be.

But how was she to get through the gates

with both hands full! Shall she call Cherry to come and open it for her? No, that would spoil it all, for the great thing is to surprise the others by bringing it to them without their knowing anything about it until they see her spoils.

So down goes the mug on the gravel path while Daisy opens the gate to the farm-yard, pushes it open, and takes up her mug while she passes through. She has to be quick, too, for there are little pigs and chickens on the look-out to get through that gate, as they want to see what is on the other side. But Daisy knows that she would get into trouble if they *did* get in the garden, so she makes a noise to frighten them off till she gets the gate to shut close, then off she goes till she reaches the corner of the rick where she left the other children.

Now she holds her hands behind her and says, "Guess what I have here;" but they can't guess, and in a moment the great leaf is spread open and the treasures all shewn. How very good that fruit seemed! And the milk was just what they wanted, so they all enjoyed it very much.

After their luncheon is finished, Connie tells them some stories about her London home and the school she goes to. They

sit and listen and think Connie must be very clever, for they find that she learns French, and music, and drawing, and at present neither Cherry nor Daisy has begun any of these things. But Daisy thinks she will be very glad when she can learn, and thinks, too, she will have a very long time to wait before she will be as old as Connie. For four years seem a great while to a little girl of eight years of age.

But while they have been listening to their cousin, their little brother Arlie has slipped down upon the straw and his sleepy eyes are fast settling into sleep. So Cherry gently lifts him up, and carries him indoors to mother until dinner is ready. And there we will leave them for the present.

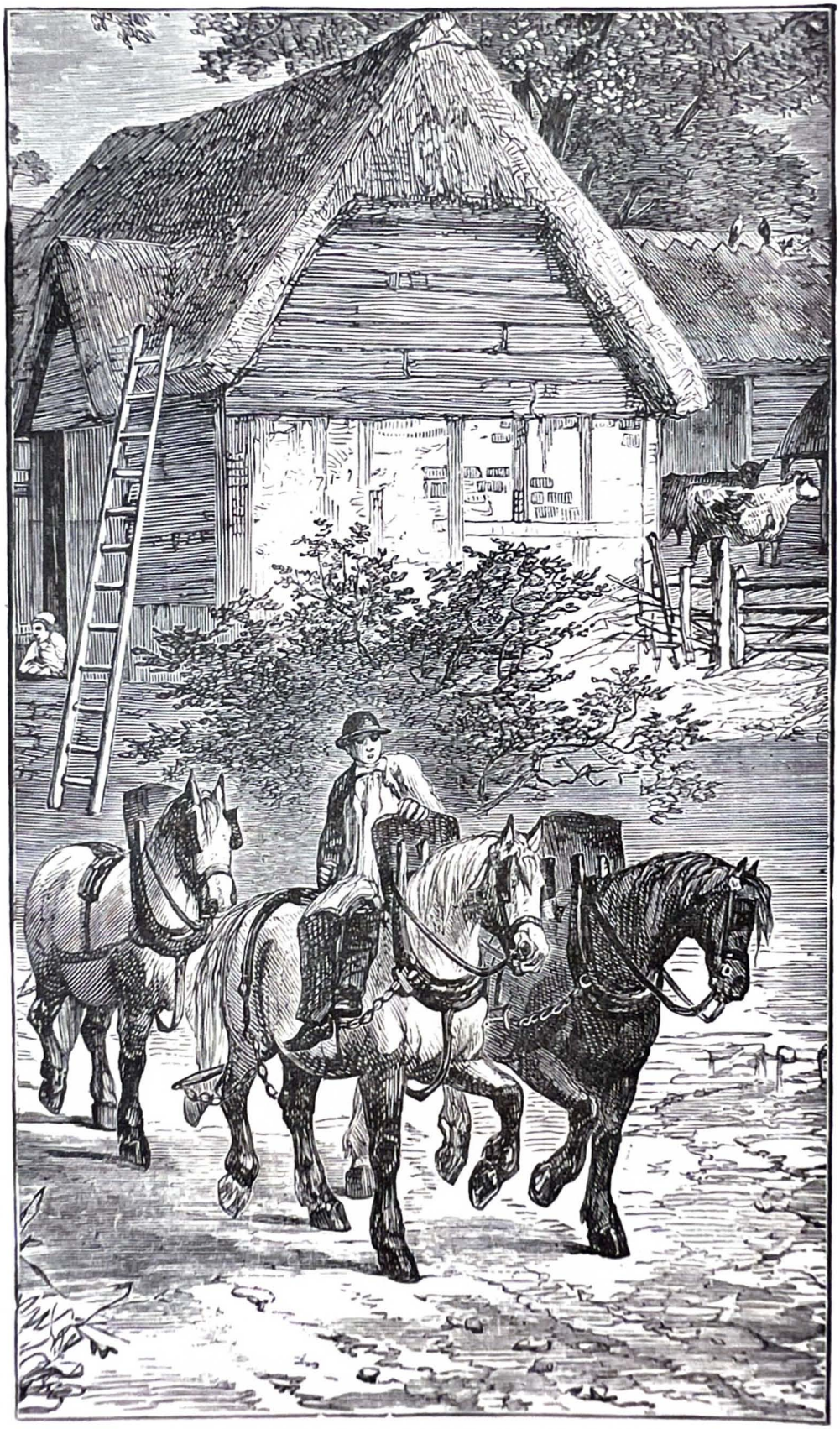
CHAPTER V.

TEA IN THE HAYFIELD.

"I WONDER if mother would let us have tea in the hayfield to-night," says one of the little girls, as they are standing at the window after dinner, while Alice is clearing the table very quietly; for Baby had not yet woke up, but was lying fast asleep in the pretty cot that stands in one corner of the pleasant sitting-room where the family dine.

If my readers could peep with me into this room they would agree with me, I am sure, in calling it a pleasant one. It is a large room, and on one side has a window that looks over the grass-plat to the farm, yard, and down the garden to the road. On the opposite side of the room is another window that looks on the flower and fruit gardens.

Right opposite the window, though some little way off, stands a large old apple tree. And well the children know the tree, for



STARTING FOR WORK IN THE FIELDS.

no other in all the garden has such apples as this; very large, very rosy on one side, and very sweet; the children never go up the garden without looking to see if there are any apples under that tree, and if they find any, there is a rush to see who will be the first to pick up the prize. But as the apples are not nearly ripe yet, the children are not tempted to run across the growing vegetables to get them. So they are just looking at the meadows beyond, where the mowers' scythes can be heard, as first one and then another has to be rubbed with the stone, that Daisy thinks looks something like a school ruler in shape, only its colour is grey instead of black.

Very useful are these strange-looking "rulers." All the mowers have them tucked in a leather case on their belts, so as to be always at hand. And as soon as the sharp edge of the scythe gets dulled by the work of cutting through the grass, up goes the scythe on the handle, the long sharp blade flashing in the sun, the rubber is pulled out of the sheath, and then backwards and forwards from one end of the blade to the other goes the stone that gives a new edge to the scythe, after it has been rubbed quickly along it for a minute or two.

As the little ones hear this pleasant sound, it makes them hope all the more that mother will agree to their going out into the hayfield for a long afternoon.

"May we have tea in the meadow to-day, mother?" says Cherry at last, "and may Arlie go too?" As their kind mother, who likes to give them all the nice things she can, thinks it over for a few seconds, Connie adds, "And may Alice come and bring baby May, and then you will be able to have a quiet time?"

At last mother says, "Well, yes, I think I can spare Alice to-day, but you must mind and not get into mischief. Don't pull the hay down after the men have put it up, and mind you do not hinder them. And you must take great care of Arlie, and not let him get near the horses' feet, if you go for rides in the hay carts."

Of course they all promise to be very careful, and it is settled that the three little girls and Arlie shall go on first, and Alice and baby in an hour's time. She will then stay with them, and all come home in the haycart together. The field they want to go to is quite a walk from the house, along the high road, and over a canal, where the children are very fond of standing on the bridge that crosses, to see

the barges pass under, drawn along by horses. If they see a barge ever so far off they always want to stay till it passes. There were very often some poor little dirty children playing about on the barges, and mostly a woman, with a bright-coloured handkerchief tied over her head, who steers it.

Sometimes two of these clumsy boats would meet, and then the men on the towing-path had to be sharp and see that the long ropes that pulled the barges along, drawn by horses, did not get twisted or tangled together, for it has even been known for men and boys to be tumbled into the canal by the ropes getting wrong. So there is just a little spice of danger, the children think, as the two boats pass each other.

Well, at last the basket to hold the fruit and bread and butter and cake, that is to be eaten out in the sunny meadow, is all ready, and given to Cherry to carry; her mother telling her that Alice shall bring them some tea when she comes.

Some cups are already packed on the top of the basket, and off they start. It takes them some time to get to the canal, and longer still to get over it. For of course Connie wants to stay and see the barge

pass under, that they can see a good way off.

Very slowly does the poor tired old horse pull the barge along, but at last it nears them. They lean over the bridge until the end of the boat is passing under, and then rush to the other side to see it emerge again to the open air. After watching it for a minute they all run off down the steep bridge, and are very soon at the meadow gate. A fine field it is that they run into now. Far away it stretches before them, full of great haycocks, waiting to be carted in some places; only in the swathe in others; and to the great glee of our young friends they see a cart just ready to start to the other side of the meadow. They run up to the driver, and tell him they want to go too. Their father is not far off, but just nods his head to them as he sees them being lifted up into the big haycart. The men are very good to "the master's little ones," and they are not at all afraid, and shout with glee as they feel themselves jolted along over the rough ground, every now and then getting such a shake as the cart passes one of the cuttings that drain the meadow. It is just the jolting and shaking that they like, and the ride across the meadow is all too

short for them. But at last they come to the place where the men are going to load, so they all spring quickly down. Here they are close to a large ditch that runs along that side of the meadow, and they catch sight of some very fine grass and bulrushes. So at once they try to gather some, but after nearly tumbling into this deep ditch, which is half full of water, they are obliged to give it up, and leave the funny-looking bulrushes in the water, looking very much like pokers wrong way up.

But I must leave you all to think what fine times the children had for the next hour, hiding behind the haycocks, burying each other in them, getting another ride, best thing of all as they think, and at last, with their hats wreathed with the lovely pink convolvulus, finding their way back to the tree where their basket is hidden under some cool green leaves, and where they find Alice and May waiting for them.

Very soon some nice large dock-leaves were found, and one is put to each for a plate, and for a little while all is quiet under the old oak tree, for no one can talk and eat at the same time. And as the basket begins to get empty, and the large jug of tea nearly finished, the children's

tongues are heard once more, telling Alice and May what they have been doing.

Little May toddles about, and gets many a tumble on the soft grass, but as it is softer than a carpet she does not mind, and seems to think, if anything, that it is all the more fun. Then she and Alice, and all the others, are mounted once more in the next cart that is going, and they are all jolted and tumbled to the place where great heaps of hay stand ready to be taken up on the great pitchforks and shot into the cart, to be taken off to the rick-yard and piled up there to form another rick when all is carried.

As the children know that rushes grow in wet places, they begin to hunt along the sides of the ditch for some. And as they find a good many they begin to make them into what they call parasols; they really are the same shape, though they are too small to keep off the sun.

It may be that she was tired, I am sure she was very cross, but it is not a great while before Daisy seems quite naughty, and speaks rudely and unkindly to the others. She will not help them look for more rushes, nor mind Arlie while they go, nor do anything Alice tells her. But as I am sorry to say they often saw her

like this, they did not take much notice of it, so at last Daisy was left to herself.

That was the best thing for her, and as she went and sat down by the hedge alone, she felt as though she was very badly treated, but as she had no one to quarrel with, her ill temper could not last very long.

Why was it, do you think, that she was so naughty, just because she found fewer rushes than Cherry? Well, I will tell you why I think it was. Daisy was thinking only of herself, and forgot not only that she would spoil the play for the others, but she forgot the verse I told you some time ago. Daisy did not like to think God saw her. And then if we are bent on doing just what *we like*, it is nearly sure to end in our doing wrong. And indeed that makes me think of another verse. I will tell you part of it:

"ALL HAVE SINNED."

Now this is true of every one of us. And we can only get to the bright side of this verse when we believe, each one for ourselves, that the Lord Jesus died to put away all these sins, that so often come out in naughty ways as with Daisy now.

I will just tell you of a dear little girl I used to know, who was not eight years old, but who knew she was sometimes naughty,

though I knew it was very seldom. But she knew she had a wicked heart, and loved very much to hear and read of God's love, and of Jesus, who was punished instead of her, and she did as the Bible tells us to do, she trusted in the Lord Jesus as her own Saviour, One that she could not do without.

When first she came to stay with us, she often used to say a little hymn, and one line of it was this :

"Let my sins be all forgiven."

Well, one day she was repeating this, when all at once she stopped and looked very puzzled.

"What is the matter, dearie?" I said, and she answered :

"I can't say that now. God HAS forgiven me, so how can I ask Him to forgive me again? In that last text that I learnt it says, 'If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Dosn't it say so?"

I knew our dear little girl meant what she said, and I was very glad too. So after a minute I told her she could alter the line to this :

"All my sins Thou hast forgiven."

And then she was quite ready to finish the rest of the hymn, and never afterwards did I hear her say it in any other way. Now how many of you would be able to alter the first line to the second for yourselves? Just think over it and see. I am glad to tell you that Daisy and her sisters did really learn this, and were able from their very hearts to take the second line for their own, though not on the day we have been telling you. Then Daisy was left to sit alone until she was in a better humour, and by the time that the

"Trees threw long shadows on the grass,"

and the men were leaving off work, and the last load of hay left the field, she had quite forgotten to be naughty, and was ready to run with the others to be lifted into the cart that was to carry them home. As their father went too, they were all very good till the farm was reached, then they found out that they were so sleepy they did not care for anything so much as to be able to lie down in bed.

Very soon they were all there, and Manor Farm was quiet and still once again; and the dear tired mother glad to know that all her noisy little chicks were safe at home.

CHAPTER VI.

A RAINY MORNING.

"PITTER, patter, pitter, patter, down the window-pane," went the rain drops the next morning, as the children awoke. "Oh, dear! it is raining fast," was the greeting that Connie met as she roused herself up to hear and see.

Raining fast indeed it was, and although the children were sorry to see it, because it would keep them indoors, yet to a good many people rain just then was most welcome, and the sound of falling drops, as they splashed and pattered on the leaves and grass, or on the windows and roofs of the houses, was like very pleasant music to them. So dear little friends, the next time you feel sorry when you see it rain, just think that many thanks are perhaps going up to God for that same rain.

Parched-up fields and gardens are drinking in the drops as more precious than gold. Thirsty cows, horses, and sheep,

would tell you, if they could, how glad it makes them to see the rain. In many parts of the country a hot, dry summer means a great deal of suffering, both to men and cattle.

Think of the poor cows on a farm having to be driven four miles on a burning hot day to where they could get water to drink, and then to go all the weary way back along a dusty road. Why, by the time they got home they would be almost as thirsty as ever. But at one farm this was done both morning and evening, with the same cows, for many days this summer.

Cherrie and Daisy forget all this just now, and are not at all pleased as they look out at the falling rain, while in the farm-yard the ducks and chickens seem glad. The cows do not run into the cow-house to get out of it. And even the little tiny chicks run out in the rain now and then, as if to try how it feels; but after a little while they run back to the coop, saying, Peep, peep, as they go. When the little ones get down-stairs they find out that it is churning day, and as they all like to see the churning done they do not think so much of the rain. Some little girls and boys are like Connie, and have never seen butter churned, so now we will have an

hour in the dairy of Manor Farm and see how they manage it. Not the least pleasant place in the farm was this dairy, with its bright red floor of tiles, and the white marble slab where the butter and cream were kept so cool.

The long white shelves were filled with large shallow milk dishes, into which the new milk was put and left for the cream to rise. The children liked very much to see the milk skimmed. This was done twice a day, early in the morning before they were out of bed, and again in the evening before the cows were milked. At least one of the children was generally allowed to go and see the cream taken off the row of dishes that filled up the shelves which are kept scrubbed so clean and bright.

Rich, thick, and yellow lay the cream on the milk, and now the skimmer is taken up and run quickly round the edge of the dish; then, as the cream is loosened, it is passed under it and lifted up, covered with cream, that does not run through the tiny holes with which the skimmer is pierced, and which serve to let the milk through, as that is not wanted.

But I must tell you what the skimmer is like. It is a thin piece of metal about the

size of a dessert plate, a little hollowed in the middle, full of small holes, and having a round handle in the form of a ring on the upper side of it to hold by.

Now you can all fancy, I hope, how the skimming is done. Very clever it seemed to Daisy to slip the skimmer so quietly under the cream, and she liked to see it roll into the cream pan. And also how it left all the milk behind, so white, cool, and sweet.

The dishes were all skimmed one after the other, and then the cream was put into the huge white and yellow pans on the slab, and the milk poured away to be used up, partly for the calves that the children are so fond of seeing fed.

Well, all the cream is now ready, so the churn is got out and stood ready too. A large barrel laid on its side on a tall stand, with a handle on one end. That is all Connie can make of it at first, but she finds that the handle is slipped into a groove on the stand at one end, and that a little iron rod in the same part at the other end fits into a similar groove on the other side of the stand, so the churn swings easily as she touches it.

As Daisy tells her to turn the handle she finds it goes right over and over quite

easily. But it is empty. Now comes Alice with some boiling water, which she pours into the square hole on one side of the churn ; then she puts the cover on and fastens it down, tells the children to run off a little way in case any of the boiling water should spurt out and splash them, gives the churn a few slow turns to let the boiling water go into every part, and then quickly empties it out—does it again with cold water, and it is ready for the cream to be poured in.

Connie peeps into the churn and she sees there are queer little shelves with holes in them in it, and thinks it is a very funny thing. Now the great pans of cream are brought and poured slowly in through a strainer, until every pan is emptied, and the churn nearly full ; then some salt is put in, and the cover screwed on so that not a drop can escape, and a man comes to turn the churn round and round until the cream is turned into butter.

It seems hard work now, but the man must not leave off, so on goes the churn, over and over, for half an hour, and then the butter begins to "come" as they call it. But Connie has not been watching the man all this time. She has been seeing her aunt get ready the things for making

up the butter into dear little pats with such pretty flowers stamped on them, and into long rolls that are sent away every week to the town.

As she looks on and sees the little wooden pats and the large oaken bowl that the butter is made up in all put into boiling water, she asks why they do so, as she thinks it would make them melt the butter. But her aunt shews her how they are put under the mouth of the pump after this, and the cold spring water dashed over them until they are as cool as can be. She tells her the boiling water prevents the butter sticking to the pats or to the churn.

Then the butter is said to be "come." The man takes off the cover, pours in a lot of cold water, after he has let the butter-milk run away, turns the churn again, and then allows the water to escape. He does this till all the milky part has run off and the golden butter only is left.

As Connie sees the firm yellow lumps taken carefully out and made up into pretty dainty little pats, it almost seems like play, or at least very pleasant work. Dish after dish is filled with the rolls and pats and placed on the cold marble slab to cool. At last all is finished except one small lump, and then four tiny little pats are

made, much smaller than the others, and the children know, even before they are told, that these are for themselves for tea that evening, and very pleased they are, too, for they do not always have them, and they like to have a whole pat of their own on their plates at tea-time.

Well, now the churning is all done, and, leaving the dairy, the little ones go off to something else. They find that the rain is over, but as the ground is still wet, they all go to the barn to play. They can make as much noise as they like there, and they generally like a good deal of noise.

Such a great rambling place is the old barn, piled even up to the high roof with trusses of yellow straw, and in some parts with hay. Then there are all kinds of odd-looking farm things kept here. In one part the barn floor is kept clear for threshing wheat, and Daisy spies a flail in one corner, and pretends to be using it with a great deal of hard work. As a town girl does not see corn threshed she may wonder what the two sticks joined together by a piece of leather can do; but she soon sees when Will comes and shews her how the corn is beaten out by it, when people have not enough to need a machine for the purpose.

Then a game of hide-and-seek comes next, and Cherrie and Daisy can climb the straw to the very top of the barn, where Connie dare not go, and the old barn soon rings with shouts of merry laughter as they slide down the straw or tumble over it. And not till Alice comes to find them and tell them to get ready for dinner are they tired of their play; for as the holidays are not very long ones, the children think they must make the most of them, and their kind mother is ready to do all she can to make it a happy time for them.

But play-time comes to an end, and even while it lasts, does not altogether satisfy even little ones; but after dinner they are very, very quiet, for they have been told of what seems to all a very sad event.

On one side of the farm, and only divided from it by a hedge, is a beautiful drive, edged by flower borders, that leads up to a large house where lives a rich man, whose family the farm youngsters sometimes see driving in their handsome carriage, or riding their horses. But only a few days ago one of Mr. B——'s little girls was taken ill, very ill. She grew worse and worse. Nothing the doctor could do was of any use, and at last she

died. Yes! the bright, happy, laughing girl was lying white and still, never again to open her eyes in this world. She was dead.

Daisy, at least, felt it was a dreadful thing. She did not know then that if that dear little girl had trusted in the Lord Jesus He had taken her to a much happier place than even her beautiful home—a place where little children are never ill, or tired, or naughty, but where they are with the Lord Jesus Himself for ever, and where He makes them quite happy.

No! Daisy knew nothing of this. She knew very well SHE was often naughty, and she did not like to think of dying then; but long after she did trust herself and all she had done to Jesus, then she found it made her very glad to think of it, for she wanted to see the One who died for her—her own precious Saviour.

Well, the children were told that Mr. B——'s dear little girl was dead, and was to be laid that afternoon in a vault of the churchyard close by, and soon after they saw the sad group of friends passing by the garden gate; the horses moving so slowly, and one carriage covered with a long black and white cloth came first; Alice told them that was the hearse, where the

little dead girl was lying. Then came several carriages full of sad-faced people, and when they had all gone by, it felt very strange and lonely to think they would never again see that dear little girl.

I do not like to make any of you sad, but I want you to think of this, that if that little girl loved and trusted the Lord, she was happier then than she had ever been when she was alive, for her SPIRIT was not in the coffin, but was with her Saviour. He wants to save you, too. I am sure you all know that the Lord Jesus loves children, and that if you go to Him He will save you. When I say go to Him, I do not mean that there is any distance between you, but that He is at all times quite close to you: you have only to ask Him to take you, and teach you all you want to know.

Well, Daisy and the others had their first sight of what dying means, and for a little time they felt sad, but before long they were busy with something else and almost forgot the funeral they had seen. But they did not all forget it, and I am sure it is a good thing for us to remember that we may have to die, though we are not sure of it. The Lord may take us up to be with Himself without dying, but this

applies only to those who belong to Him.

I wonder how many of you would be like a little girl I once knew. She went to stay at a farm for a time, and there was one of the cows which had a very bad habit of running at people, and every one except the men were very much afraid of this cross old cow. It was an Alderney. One day little Flo had to pass near the cow, with only a hedge between them. As one of her friends was with her I do not know that she felt afraid, but when they got safely past, Flo said:

"If ever the Alderney runs at me, and kills me, Auntie, you will know I am quite safe, won't you. I shall go right up to the Lord Jesus, so you must not worry about me." Florrie was only about eight years old, so you will see that even little girls are not too young to think of these things.

After a long afternoon spent in the pretty garden, the little girls of the farm went in to shew Connie their dolls, of which they were very proud, and as they only had one in the year they had to be careful of them. Every May they were taken to a warehouse to choose a doll for each of the little girls, and great was the

business of choosing. Should they have black hair or fair? for most of these were wax dolls with long curls. I think no dolls could be more prized, and they were taught to dress them themselves. It was quite an event to have Connie to shew them a new way to make a frock or a bonnet. Thus they were as busy as bees till bed-time came round, and almost sorry to have to put away their needles, thimbles, and scraps of silk and ribbon, and lay their dolls in their little beds, before they went off to their own.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE ORCHARD.

THE pretty flower garden in front of the sitting-room window was a favourite place for the children, but they were not always allowed to go there. It was here that the rose tree grew, that climbed up that part of the house.

In the border that ran along under the windows some fuchsias were growing, which were so large as almost to touch the high old-fashioned window-sill. And lovely Christmas roses with their large snowy flowers were to be found in this border in the early days of spring. The garden sloped down to a little stream at the bottom, not at all deep, but rather wide, and down the slope to this stream it was the delight of the little ones to run, and come to a sudden stand-still lest they should find themselves in the clear bright

water. It was only a few inches deep, so there was no danger.

Here grew some famous water-cress, not wild, as seen in some streams, but tended and cared for very carefully. Such cress as grew here was seen nowhere else, so said all the people around, and many a fine handful was begged by the villagers when they had friends coming to tea.

One day when Cherry and Daisy were watching their father as he was doing something to the cress, they heard him say a word or two of surprise, and at the same moment saw him dash into the middle of the stream and grasp fiercely at something which they could not see. For a few seconds they could not think what it could be that their father was trying to seize, as he dashed his arms into the water, but in less time than it takes to tell it, an enormous eel was flung on to the gravel path at the edge of the water.

Such a large one Daisy never saw before, and as her father caught it again, after rolling it in the gravel so that it was not so slippery, and carried it off to the house, she said she thought eels were very ugly things.

To-day a great treat was in store for the

young ones of the farm. They were all asked to tea at their grandma's house, where a kind uncle and aunt also lived. There was a dear little pony there, so they always wished for a ride, and seemed to like it better than the large horses at home. Then there was a fine orchard, with a great many cherry trees in it, and they were allowed to have all they liked, and to get them themselves, too, which was the best part of it.

The children liked an afternoon in their uncle's orchard very much. It was a large orchard, as I told you at first, but it was not only the size that made it such a welcome place; it had pretty grassy nooks and corners, and little dells, a fine large pond, shaded by an old walnut tree, and all kinds of apples and plums grew in it, pears also, but perhaps more cherries than anything else. How much fruit could be eaten on a hot summer's day by one girl or boy I am afraid to tell you. But as they had to pluck them from the trees first and eat them as they did so, perhaps it was not so many as seemed to be after all, for they were not allowed to climb the ladder sometimes left there; so they either reached down a bough and shook it, or else knocked the boughs with a long pole,

and then laughed to see the pretty red fruit come dropping on their heads, or in their hands, and at their feet. Such large red and white bigaroon cherries, such black or red ones as they found there they thought they never got anywhere else.

How pleasant it was to lie on the thick grass under one of the large trees loaded with the bright red fruit, and dancing up to get those that fell, as Will shook a bough that hung over them. Well, it was all thought to be one of the best of good things, and they enjoyed it as only young hearts can. But afternoon in a cherry orchard is no longer than in other places, and as the long shadows began to fall round them they all went in to their uncle's to tea.

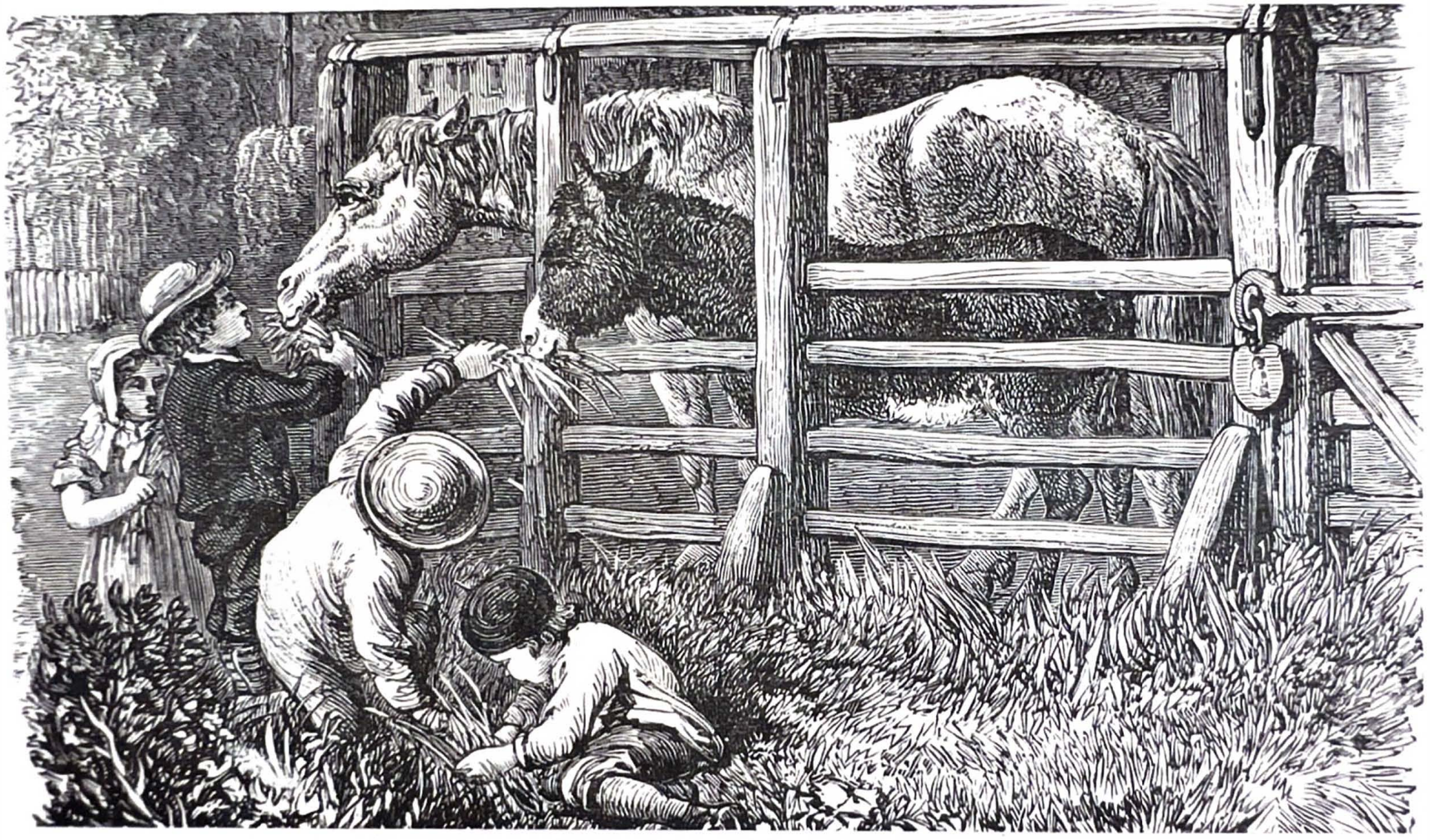
How kind the Grandma was, and their aunt gave them cake and strawberries, and bread and butter, and tea in such pretty old china cups, and uncle made them laugh at his funny sayings, until it was time to start home.

After all the good-byes were said, and uncle had brought in a packet of barley sugar for them to take home to Arlie and baby May, they all started off for the walk home, and when they got there what a deal they had to tell of their doings at

uncle's. How clever the little pony was, which had learned to undo his stable door with his teeth, and then found his way up the drive, and through the garden, and so to the back door, as if to ask for the piece of sugar or carrot, that he often had there; and how uncle was afraid he would trample on the strawberry bed, but he walked off to his stable again, quite satisfied, after he had been patted and spoken to, and had some sugar.

On the way home Connie was told of a pretty little curly dog called Fan, that once had always been at grandma's when they went there. It had had such a nice little kennel just outside the back door, and used to play with them when they went to grandma's as they had done to-day.

But one day they were there to dinner, and after dinner Fan had been given some bones close to her kennel. One large bone had fallen a little way off, so Daisy was going to pick it up to throw it closer, as she thought, when out sprang Fan quite fiercely and bit poor Daisy on the leg rather badly, and made her scream with pain and fright. I suppose Fan was afraid that her dinner was to be taken away again.



CHILDREN FEEDING THE MARE AND COLT.

As Daisy had been told not to go near the kennel it was all her own fault, but that makes pain harder to bear than anything else.

Well, Daisy was taken home, and after a week or two her leg got quite well, but poor little Fan was killed, so that she might never bite any one else. And Daisy felt after how naughty she had been to go near the kennel, and cause poor Fan's death, and she wished she could have known before how sadly her naughtiness would end; but when we do wrong we never can tell what will come of it. A thing that seems a very little thing to us may make trouble, and give sorrow to a great many people.

Daisy found this out, and did really try now and then to be a good girl, but somehow it never seemed any good, she was sure to be the same as ever after a little while.

She found at last that she must have a Friend to make her able to do right, and she found One when she trusted in the Lord Jesus. Ah, dear children, there is no Friend, no Saviour, but Jesus, who will love you spite of all your naughtiness, and save you from it, and at last take you where sin never can come at all.

After the farm was reached Will's rabbits had to be fed, and the other children begged to go and see them. Three funny little hutches, made by Will himself, were almost full of the pretty, long-eared, silky little animals, some black and white, and some grey and brown, but all with pretty soft eyes, and all very hungry now, for they were pressing their noses through the wire doors of the hutches, and began at once to nibble the cabbage leaves that were given them.

The little wooden troughs that held their food were filled with a soft mixture that Will had made, and some oats were put in, too; then all the little rabbits were taken out for a few minutes to run about on the floor. Such soft, pretty little furry creatures they were, they could run so fast that the children could hardly catch them.

Will says he shall sell some of them soon, and get more pigeons, he thinks, as he has only two left now. The rabbits take nearly all his money for food.

When they are put back into the hutches, and the door of the shed locked to keep them safely, the children are not at all willing to go to bed at once, so

they all go and look into the cow-house, but as it is summer time the cows are out in the open meadows, but the dear little tiny calves are all lying fast asleep in their house, and the chickens are roosting in their places in the hen-house.

Then they look over at the pigs in their funny little sties, where they are kept so clean and nice that no one thinks here that pigs are dirty animals. Ten little young pigs, not more than two or three weeks old, are lying there with their mother, fat funny little black things that jump and tumble about as playfully as kittens. The children think that very little pigs are not at all ugly things, though they do think that old ones are rather ugly. But they turn away from the squealing little family of pigs and find old Peggy slowly moving off to the stable.

Who is old Peggy? you will ask.

If you ask the children they will tell you she is the best mare in the world, and they can remember her as long as they can anything, for she was their father's favourite horse before any of them were born.

Though she is not a pretty pony like the one at their uncle's, and much too

big for any of them to be able to get on her back alone, yet when their father or any one else will lift them up they are as safe as can be in such a place. As soon as old Peggy feels their weight on her back she seems to know that she must move carefully, and she never does anything to make them afraid, but just goes softly round the yard until they like to get off.

Cherry and Daisy are not at all afraid of her, and will ride as often as their father will let them; and when they want to get off, Peggy will stand quite still and let them slip off by themselves, or spring off, whichever they like.

A good patient old thing is Peggy, and when any extra hard work or long journey has to be got through Peggy is the best one to do it. No one ever knew *her* get into a bad temper—so little girls may well try and copy her in this.

As Peggy comes up to our little friends they all begin to stroke her fat sides, and some of them run and fetch her a handful of hay and give her little bits at a time, and Peggy lowers her sleek head and takes the wisps of fragrant hay from the little hands as gravely as though she knew all about them, and would not for

anything bite the brown little fingers so near her great teeth.

Peggy is an old friend and they know she can be trusted; she is often allowed to roam about in the farmyard when any other would be tied in the stables, so that is how she comes to be here to-night at her own will. This shews that it is a good thing to be trusted, and we shall find, too, how happy it is to trust the only One who is able to teach us to live so that others may learn to trust in us.

If some of you say, "But I do not know where to begin to learn," I will just give you a word of the Lord. It is this: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." Whatever you need to teach you how to trust, just do what the Lord Himself says to you in these words. Ask Him, and you will get all you need, and far more than you have any idea of now.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISITORS AT THE FARM.

BREAKFAST was over in the pleasant sitting-room of the farm, and the children were at once to begin to help Alice pick some fruit for making tarts, and for some jam which their mother intended to make.

Now four pairs of little hands can pick a great many bunches of red currants, and numbers of ripe gooseberries, if they will only set to work in good earnest. Their kind mother knew that children enjoy play a great deal, more, if they have a little real work to do in between their games, and I think we all like to feel that we are of some use in the world, though we do not all like to do things that are not pleasant.

But did any of you ever see an idle child look bright and happy? I mean a

child who is really idle at all times. I do not think there are many such, but there are a few. If any of you are ever tempted to be idle, just see if you are happy in being so. I am sure you will soon want something to do.

So now the little girls were all quite ready to have rough aprons tied over their nice dresses, so that the fruit might not spoil them, as they gather it. Each of them took a little basket, and then Alice went with them, after her mistress had told her where to get the fruit, as some trees were riper than others. This happy little party were soon running up the garden path to the part planted with the smaller fruit trees instead of apples and pears and cherries.

Many a peep into the bright little stream did the little ones give, and such shoals of tiny gleaming minnows did they see, that Alice often had to call them away before they were at last at work in stripping off the bright and juicy fruit.

One reason why the stream had a great interest for the children was the fact that eels were now and then found in the shallow water in the flower garden, as I told you before, and even though they did not care much for eating these

eels themselves, yet as they knew that their father and mother liked them, they were glad to see them, as they knew the deep stream flowed into the shallow one, and the eels were easily taken there. So this was a reason for the sharp little eyes peering so eagerly down into the running water.

At last they are all busily picking away at the red currants, two at one tree and two at another, while Alice took one to herself. The whole tree must be quite cleared before they went to another, and at first it seemed as if the two trees would soon be cleared, but before very long fingers grew tired and seemed to move very slowly, and then they began to think it would take a long time to clear all the currants off their tree. They were not the only ones who start well and then tire; but if we go on steadily, not stopping to think how much remains still to be done, we shall find that the work *will* be done at last. It is only one step at a time, or one bunch of currants at a time; but whatever it is, just let us go on, and not grumble over it, but keep on trying.

In this fruit-picking, the little ones had got a good many already, and were

allowed to leave off for a minute or two, and eat some of the large red and yellow gooseberries, of which they were so fond.

Then back they went to work till the trees were stripped of all the pretty clusters of currants, and looked very bare and empty.

Then their little baskets were emptied into the large one that Alice had, and they thought they had got a great many and ran off to shew them to mother and know if there are enough for to-day. But mother thinks she must have some more for jam, so off they run once more, and though I am sorry to say they are not so good tempered as they should be about it, yet they do set to work, and sometimes eating gooseberries, and the rest of the time picking, they get the baskets well filled once more, and then are able to take off their aprons, and after washing the little hands that are red with juice, they will be able to feel that they had earned the game of play which they all went off to the meadows to have. And as the field next the garden is all cut now, and the haymakers busy at work there, they have a romp in the hay first, and then some of them get

a long stick and pretend to be making up the hay into heaps like men.

Presently their father comes along and sees them; he tells them they may have some of the rakes that are lying a little way off, and rake up some of the hay that has been left behind by the men. Then he shews them how to hold the rake, so that the little wooden spikes that form the teeth shall not catch in the roots of the grass and get broken.

The young haymakers set to work again, or rather to play, for it is only play; they think they are helping their father very much. At last they get quite a lot of hay, and as they heap it up into a haycock they are quite proud of their work, because they know that they really have been useful. When their heap of hay is piled up into as good a shape as they can manage, they are glad to sit down in the shadow of the trees.

Then comes the cart that is taking up the hay that is fit to be built up into the rick; they come closer and closer, and the children see the great pitchforks being thrust deep into each haycock, then it is tossed up into the cart and piled there along with many others. As the men come up to the heap that the

children have made they look at it, for they can see it is not men's work, and they know the little ones did it. But there is no time to waste, so into the cart it goes and is pressed down with all the other, and the men go off to the next one.

Before they have filled the cart the children see the men who are putting the hay into heaps, stick their forks upright in the ground, and begin walking away, and then they see the other men lay down their rakes and go and sit down under the trees, where there are some baskets and little bundles in handkerchiefs, and from these the men take the bread and cheese that most of them have for dinner.

So now the little ones know it is one o'clock, and that they, too, must go home and get ready for the dinner that they begin to want.

When dinner is over they are told that their grandma and aunt are coming to tea, and so they are to have their clean pinafores on, and their hair neat, before they come, so as to be ready to see them at once. But Daisy thinks there is time for half an hour at the see-saw, before Alice will call them in to have their washing and dressing.

Daisy was very fond of the see-saw that her eldest brother had made, but as it was not very safe their mother did not like it, and Cherry did not often go on it. It was a long plank laid across the top bar of the fence that went all round the rick-yard. As this fence was rather high, each end of the plank went up into the air, first one end and then the other, to a height that made it look anything but safe for Daisy to try. She was not, however, afraid, and dearly liked to feel herself going up, up, as her brother went down on the other end. Daisy always grasped the plank very tightly with both hands; she had never had a fall from it yet; but when they get to it now, Connie will not be tempted to take her seat on one end, not even the end that falls in the rick-yard, where the hay and straw on the ground would be soft to fall upon if she did get a tumble.

Well, as neither Cherry nor Connie will take one end, the see-saw has to be given up until Will comes home from school, as he is very fond of it too, and cannot always get another to join him. Daisy knows she is nearly sure to get one then unless he is busy with something else.

Then they remember that Connie has not yet seen the tiny flower dolls that they make, so now she is taken into the flower garden, where the beautiful fuchsias grow, not tiny pots, but large trees of them, with hundreds of blooms.

Here the little girls begin to hunt for the largest fuchsia blossom they can find, and picking it off quite close to the flower, they shew Connie how much the half-opened petals are like the skirts of a tiny doll; the upper part of the blossom forms the body; now they search for a very small rose-bud to form the head, and after pushing it into the fuchsia they fasten it on with thorns picked from the roses too, and with the same kind of pins they fasten on the head a bonnet made of a petal from some other bright blossom. In the same manner they put on it a rose leaf or lily leaf cloak, and Daisy thought they were dear little dolls made in this way.

The only pity was, these dolls would be all faded and dead in a few hours, but they liked to play with them and give them names while they did last. This doll-making was rather a long affair, so they had hardly finished when they heard some quickly-moving wheels going

over the stones near the large gate of the drive up to the farm. Then they shouted, "There's aunt, there's grandma!" which was followed by all of our little friends running through the garden into the place where the little pony-chaise had just come to a stand, and there sat their very welcome visitors, smiling at the noisy greeting they received.

Now auntie gets down, and helps grandma out very carefully, for, only think of it! grandma is nearly *ninety* years old, and her hair is very silvery, and her face has a great many lines in it, but her cheeks are so pink and pretty that her little grandchildren often forget that she was born a very, very long time ago; so long that she can remember when the name of Napoleon Bonaparte was a terror to the women and children, for they said he was coming to take England for himself.

Grandma could also remember the dreadful year, when the only bread that poor people could get was what they called *black* bread; for the war had caused a famine of wheat, and so rye and barley, and worse things than those, were made into bread, and there was great misery and sorrow for a long time.

Grandma would tell the children about these times, when they were quiet with her upstairs in her own room, and they liked to hear about it, and as she never seemed to forget that children were fond of sweeties, and generally had some to give them, they had very nice times with grandma.

After aunt has helped her down there are quite a lot of funny little parcels to be taken out of the chaise, before the little pony can be taken off and led to the stable for his feed of corn. But at last all is lifted out, and after seeing pony made all safe, the little ones follow aunt and grandma into the house.

For a few minutes they have to wait, for mother is busy talking to them, and they must not be rude enough to interrupt her; but when mother goes to see that Alice is getting tea ready, aunt brings all the little brown parcels forward, and great is the delight as first a parcel of gingerbread, and then some nice sugar-candy is opened, and some fine nuts, a toy for Arlie and May, and a nice little present for Lizzie, and even something for Connie, so she is not quite forgotten. But as the last parcel is opened, and the children see a beautiful tiny set of tea-

things, so pretty and delicate, they are hardly able to thank their kind aunt.

The little tea-things were all white, but some of the colour of milk with stripes as clear as water, and as they were made abroad, and were thought very nice indeed, they meant to take great care of them. They were for both Cherry and Daisy, and as long as they lasted they were highly prized; but they were not quite strong enough to be played with, so before many weeks they were all broken, but just now they were a joy to them all, as they never saw anything like them before.

They were all quite busy with their new gifts till tea was ready, and then they were quiet while tea was going on, as they were never allowed to talk much when visitors were there; their father and mother liked to be able to talk themselves and listen to their friends, and not be troubled by little tongues.

However they too liked to listen, and hear, and now and then they had a kind word spoken to them, and there were a good many whispers to each other to-day, because they had so many things to talk over. And after tea grandma will sometimes let Cherry and Daisy go round

the garden with her, and hear the little hymns they know, and tell them to try and be useful and good.

But the time seems to go very quickly, and the little ones are not allowed to stay indoors all the time, as their mother wishes to have a quiet talk alone with her visitors; so they go off to the pony and stay there until the time comes to harness it, and drive up to the house. They then see dear grandma driven away by their aunt, a nice cool ride home in the evening.

After the visitors are gone out of sight, the children all go in, and mother and Alice must look at the nice things they have had, and help them pack up the little tea-set in the case that came with them.

What love the mother needs, to have patience with all these children; and how naughty they often were, when the long day had tired them and made them cross; for not even presents would keep the cross words and looks away always.

These little ones did not know then, and had no one to tell them, of the Saviour for little children, whom they might speak to as to a dear Friend, and be forgiven and made happy too. No,

they knew nothing of this, so they were often unhappy and weary in spite of all the good things, and nice home, which they had.

It is not having good things, or beautiful homes, that gives real happiness; indeed, nothing but belonging to Jesus, the Lord, will do that. Cherry and Daisy found this out, and so have many other little ones also.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRE IN THE FARM-YARD.

"WHAT can make the sky look so red to-night? It gets brighter every minute!" The words were scarcely spoken, when brother Will rushed into the sitting-room where most of the children were, just before time for "going up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire," as they called going to bed.

"There is a tremendous fire somewhere, mother, quite close here. May I go and see it?"

But Will is so anxious to get off that he hardly waits for an answer, and almost before the little girls know what is the cause of it, Will is across the farm-yard and running up the road that leads across the canal to the nearest market town, for it is in this direction that the fire appears to be.

Mother and all the children now go

out to the little grass-plat, and see at once the cause of the sky being so red. Over the tops of the houses and trees in the valley between, they see clouds of fiery smoke and showers of sparks rising and falling. Then great masses of black smoke and large flakes of fire rise up, and they all hurry off to the large gate that leads out of the farm-yard to the road by which Will has gone. Men and boys are hurrying past, and they hear a good many remarks as to where it is, but nobody knows for certain. Then they hear a loud rumbling sound, and the rush of horses' hoofs as they gallop up the road, and the children see a fire-engine go by them as fast as the galloping horses can go.

The men are clinging on anyhow, and only eager to get to the fire. Then come more people, some are women and children, for a fire in a village draws every one to the spot who can possibly go. Great flames can now be seen from the farm; they rise high above the tops of the trees, that look like bronze in the light beyond, and as the children look, and talk, and feel rather afraid of the fire that seems so close, their mother tells them how glad they should be that

their house and ricks are safe. As they look at them they do feel glad, and they remember how grandma has told them of a terrible day when her house was on fire, and when grandpa was away from home, with their own father with him. The fire grew so fierce, and though the neighbours all tried to help they could not put it out, and the house was burnt to the ground and everything that was in it, excepting a few odd things carried out at first, but no lives were lost.

When their grandpa came back the same day, he found he had no house of his own, but only one that a kind friend had offered them as a shelter, till their own house could be built up again. All this the children used to hear, and when they saw this great fire so near them they did not feel that they could laugh and talk as they did at other times, for a house on fire is a dreadful sight.

At last their mother told them that they must go indoors. It was getting dusk, and father would be coming home and want to be quiet, so very unwillingly they go, often looking behind at the red fiery light. It is a long time before they can go to sleep this night of the fire, and they often start up to make sure that the

flames or sparks have not reached their home.

They were very anxious the next morning to know from Will where the fire was, and glad to find that it was not a house, but some large ricks, and though they had been worth a good deal of money, and would be a great loss to the owner, yet no one would lose their home, and that was, they all think, a great comfort. While they eat their breakfast, Will tells them how the men tried to save the ricks, and how the neighbours from all the houses near came to help.

Some got on the ricks that were not burning, and threw down the sheaves of corn that the men and boys below carried away as fast as they could; but the firemen had to watch and see that the great sparks that fell so thickly did not lodge on the barns of the farm-house, while others tried to keep them from the other ricks, but there was hardly any water to be had, and though everybody worked hard, one rick after the other caught, and all the people could do was to snatch off some of the sheaves till the fire was too fierce for them to go near.

Then they were all grimy and tired;

they had done their best, and the barns and house were safe, but the long row of stacks that had stood there all so bright and golden in the morning sunshine was soon so many heaps of red-hot smouldering embers.

Ah, little friends, a house or even a corn-stack on fire is a terrible thing, but did you ever hear of a *world* on fire! No, you never did. You may have heard of the world being drowned. You remember when it rained, and rained, until everything was covered, and when you see the lovely rainbow in the sky in wet weather, you know that God has put it there to remind us that He will never again let the rain come so much as to drown the world.

Instead of rain, God will destroy this world by fire.

All the houses, and everything else will be burned up, but not until after all those who trust the Lord Jesus are taken safely to his beautiful home. They will be there so safe and happy with Him, nothing can ever harm them there.

I went once to stay for a short time at a very nice house in a pleasant place, where the people were most of them very well off, so there was not much to make

children think they needed some One to save them.

One day a dear little girl came to see me. She was rather pretty, with very fair skin and long yellow hair, and she wore a pretty blue dress, and had plenty of nice toys. Well, I began to ask this little girl if she loved the Lord Jesus; but she told me she did not know much about Him, she did not know that He had died for little girls, like she was.

She had heard of heaven, and she went to church, but she did not understand what it all meant.

I asked her who it was that she thought would go to heaven, and she said at once, "Oh, good people." So then I said, "And are you good?" and she at once replied, "Oh! yes, I am."

Poor little thing! I began to tell her at once all the beautiful tale that most of you know so well, of the Lord Jesus taking up little ones like she was into His arms, and blessing them, and telling the disciples that they were to let the little children come to Him and not drive them away.

My little friend got quite fond of coming to see me, and to hear these stories, but after a time I left the town

where she lived, and did not see her again. Whether she remembers our talks, I do not know, but I do not think she would say now that she is good enough to go to heaven, for she has learnt that she has a sinful heart, and needs a Saviour.

Well, in the afternoon, after the children had heard all Willie could tell them about the fire, they begged their mother to let them go and see the still smouldering remains; but their mother did not like to trust them to go with only Alice, for fear they should get into danger, or into trouble; for a great many people were going to look at the fire, and it had spread over a large part of the field, and sparks and flakes of the fiery heaps might very easily fall on them, and their light summer frocks would quickly take fire.

So mother at first said no, they must not go. But whether they asked if she would not take them herself, or whether their disappointment made her think of it, I do not know; but at last, to the great joy of the children, they were told that if they would promise to keep quite close to her all the time, mother would take them herself.

They had not yet shewn Connie how to make what they called their flower peep-show, so they had something to take up their time until they were called in to get ready for dinner.

Shall I tell you how these flower shows were made?

A square of glass they had begged from their kind mother, was the first thing needed, a sheet of white paper large enough to cover the glass on both sides and wrap well over at the edges was the next, then they got a pair of scissors and two or three pins, and with all these things they went off into the garden. Now they were not allowed to pick any numbers of flowers they liked, but as they only wanted a few for their flower show, they could take enough for that. The glass, and paper, and other things were laid down with great care, for fear the pins should roll away and be lost, and then Cherry and Daisy began to go round to the different flowers and take one blossom here, and another there, until they had enough.

Then they came and all sat down together by the side of the brook, where the water was rippling along with a little silvery sound over the pebbles, in be-

tween the water-cress. One by one the flowers, all rather small ones, and flat like geraniums, not with numbers of petals like the rose, were laid carefully on the glass, some would not lie flat, these they had to press firmly, and sometimes they separated the petals.

The great thing, however, was to get bright colours, and as great a variety as they could. Then the prettiest was put in the centre, and the others grouped round it until the glass was filled.

I must not forget to tell you that the flowers were all put facing downwards, so it was not always easy to arrange them as they wanted, because they could not see the other side of the glass until it was finished, but this is how they did it. When the glass was quite hidden in every part, except little chinks in between the flowers, a very large leaf was hunted for; they found the soft part of a rhubarb leaf the best. This was laid over the flowers on the glass, then the paper was put over that, and held down tightly with one hand spread over it, while with the other hand they turned the glass right over.

Now the paper was folded over to the middle, in the same way you would wrap

up a book. The glass is now hidden, the paper covering it nearly everywhere. The work of the scissors comes next; a little cut is made in one corner, and then the paper is cut with great care down three sides of the square, just a little way from the edge, so as to leave a sort of paper frame ronnd the glass. When the three sides are cut round, it is finished, and great was the glee of the little ones when the cut piece of paper was lifted up and through the glass they saw a pretty group of all their brightest petals with green peeping through from the back.

These flower peep-shows were taken in for mother and the others to look at, and many an hour was happily spent out in the open air in making them.

Of course when they get older they will not care to use the time in this way, but they are very little girls now, and mother thinks it is better for them to be busy in this way than being idle and getting into mischief. It teaches them to arrange colours prettily, and to fold up things neatly too, for if all is not very nicely done it is not worth looking at.

The afternoon came and they were all dressed for their walk, and were soon

standing on the bridge over the canal and looking to see if a barge was coming. There was one not far off, so they waited until it had passed, and then a few minutes' walk brought them within sight of the farm where the smoke still rose thickly into the air from the black heaps where the stacks had been.

A pitiful sight they thought it was, everything near looked black and grimy, and the ground was bare and scorched for yards all round the outer edge of the stack fence, that was not burnt on one side.

They were soon glad to come away, the smoke blew in their faces now and then, and made their eyes ache, and to their mother it was a sad scene, as the ruins of such a fire always are to those who think much of what it costs. Before long, however, they were on their way home, and very glad that they had never had to grieve over a fire in their own farm-yard.

CHAPTER X.

THE LORD'S DAY.

EARLY morning again at Manor Farm. But how is it that the farm-yard is so quiet? No sound of horses being put into the carts, or men taking rakes and forks to the hayfield; no little children shouting and jumping about on the grass-plat, and very little of the usual busy stir of life and work. Perhaps some of you may guess that it is not a work day at all, and you would be quite right; it is the morning of the first day of the week, Sunday, as we often say, or, to give it its best name, the Lord's day.

The very cows seem to know that it is not a working day, and I am sure the horses do, and there is a hush of peace and rest over the fields and garden that I never noticed at any other time.

The birds are singing in the trees and hedges, as if they meant to have a good

time, and remind us that we can sing a glad song too, one of joy and praise, if we have learnt what has been done for us long ago on the first day of the week. Perhaps the birds know more about it than we think; anyway they give us a lesson of taking things in a bright way, and of singing praise at all times.

Do you remember *what* was done for us on the very first Lord's day? Some of you do, I am sure. It was then that God raised from the dead His Son Jesus, who came into this world thirty-three years before as a little child, and after being here all those years to shew us the love and goodness of God, as it says in the pretty little hymn:

> "Jesus who lived above the sky
> Came down to be a man and die."

Yes, after those long years of going about doing good, He gave Himself up to the death of the cross, for your sake and mine.

> "He knew how wicked men had been,
> And knew that God must punish sin;
> So out of pity Jesus said,
> 'I'll bear the punishment instead.'"

And He did bear it, yours and mine, if

we trust Him. But we should never have known it as we do now except for what God did on the first Lord's day, in raising Him from the tomb in the garden where loving hands laid Him, after He had died—yes! DIED upon the cruel cross; and because God did raise His Son, Jesus, we know now that He has forgiven us every sin, for Jesus has put them away for ever.

As this was a NEW thing in the history of the world, a new name was given to the day when the Lord Jesus rose, and to make us always remember what was then done, it was called the Lord's day. I do not wonder that it feels somehow quite a different day from any other.

Well, it was very quiet and peaceful outside Manor Farm, and inside all was quieter too than usual, until breakfast was over, for father was not out this morning to see that the haymakers were doing their work properly, but was sitting reading, and soon after nine o'clock the little girls were all dressed to go to the Sunday-school. They liked to go, though I do not think they ever felt it had much to do with them.

Cherry was older, and could understand better, but Daisy had never found

out that Jesus *loved* her ; her teacher did not tell her, and after they left the Sunday-school and went into church, and heard the clergyman read a long sermon, Daisy thought still less of *that* being for her.

The clergyman was an old gentleman, and as the pew belonging to Manor Farm was not very close to the pulpit, perhaps he never saw the children. He never said anything to interest them, and though they knew that they ought to listen (I think Cherry did listen), yet I am sure Daisy was often reading some little book, or playing with some of the things in her pocket, like a very naughty girl as she was, instead of trying to understand.

But one day, after they had said their texts and hymns as usual, and listened to the collects, and pieces that their Sunday-school teacher read to them, without in the least knowing what it all meant, the children found when they were seated in their large old pew, that instead of the grey-haired old clergyman who usually took his place and began the service, there was quite a young man, with a kind face, and eyes that seemed to see every one in the church, even the children.

It was a very unusual thing to have a strange preacher, and Daisy liked his face at once, and quite paid attention as he read or prayed. But when he began to preach she could not help listening, and as she could understand what he was saying she soon learned more than she had ever done at church before.

The preacher was a missionary, and he spoke of the poor negroes, living and dying without ever hearing of God or of His Son, or of the love of which we hear so often. He asked the people for help to send the good news to Africa and India, but before he finished he spoke some very earnest words to those in the church who had never yet trusted in the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour, and told them that they were just as bad as the poor negroes. Then he spoke to the children, and one at least learnt from his lips that day that *she* was lost. He spoke too of the Saviour, and His love; but whether it was that he did not put it as plainly as the other part, or whether Daisy did not listen so carefully, I do not know. But all she really felt was her awful danger if she were to be ill and die.

She felt sorry for once, when the preaching was over and they had to go

home ; but she could not forget what she had been hearing, and though Will and their young friends, who walked home with them, were laughing and talking as usual, she could not join them as gaily as she did at other times.

When they got home, and Cherry and the rest had gone indoors, Daisy walked down the garden to the little stream where the ferns were growing and the little minnows gliding along, as if such a thing as a sad little girl was nothing to them, then Daisy could bear it no longer and threw herself down and sobbed as she had never done before at the thought of her sins.

After this she always owned that she was *lost*—to herself, I mean, for she never talked of it to any one else, but longed for the next Sunday to come, in hope of hearing the same gentleman again. He did not, however, appear, and they never saw him again.

After a time, the grief that caused Daisy to cry so much over her naughty ways passed away, but not the sense of her danger, of her need of being saved, and when she got older, and began to work harder at her lessons, and her time was busily taken up, she had less opportunity

to think of these things. Yet even then, a look or a word would remind her of all and make her miserable.

But after all this, when she was taught by God Himself that Jesus was a Saviour for *sinners*, how glad she was; how glad just to let Him save her in His own way, and thank and love Him for it.

I am hoping that some of you may be led to do the same. You are lost, going down to hell, if you have not been to Jesus.

But, oh! I am very glad to think that as you know how God loves you, and says to you, "Come unto Me," that you may soon be saved, and be going to the bright place where the Lord Jesus is. Then you will find that everything seems brighter and better than before, because, come what will, you have a Friend and a home above, and when your eyes look for the last time on the blue sky, and green fields, and shining sun, they will open again on lovelier things than they ever beheld down here.

Well, on the day we have been speaking of, Daisy was soon called in to dinner, and was very sorry to go just then, for she knew her eyes were as red as could be, but the little rippling stream helped her now; she dipped her handkerchief in it

and tried to get rid of the tell-tale marks, and as no one looked up when she slipped quietly into her place she hoped they would not be seen. She found dinner very good, and at last was laughing as merrily as the others, and before many weeks had passed the impressions were all gone and she was as naughty as ever, and though she did try at times, at last she gave up the hope of being good.

When at last she knew Jesus as her own Saviour, she saw she had no power at all to be good of herself, and that trusting Him to make us do what He wishes, is the only way for any of us to be able to be good children.

After dinner the girls took Arlie and all went out into the garden where the climbing rose-tree was filling the warm air with its sweet scent, and they took with them some little green-covered books that told them of the work amongst the negro children abroad. They liked to read it better now, after hearing the preacher in the morning, who had come from some of these far-away places.

When they were tired of reading, there was a good deal of thinking and talking of the journey to-morrow, for the week was nearly up, and Daisy hardly knew whether

to be glad or sorry, for she did not know much of her London relatives, and was a little bit afraid of them ; but Connie was so kind, and had gone into all their games, and helped them with their dolls, that she thought she would like to go very much, so for a time the sorrow of the morning was nearly forgotten.

When the long quiet day of rest was over, a day, part of which, at least, Daisy will never, never forget, and after they had sung some of their hymns to mother, and gone up to their own bed-room, Daisy could hardly believe that she would not be there to-morrow night. She would lie awake to think what, out of her many little treasures, she wanted to take with her to-morrow, and she hoped she would wake early in the morning. Perhaps she would have slipped out of bed to go out into the long corridor, and lean over the banisters to call to Alice and ask her to wake her, only she did not much like the idea of going out in the dark.

I will tell you one reason why she was afraid. Their brother Will was very fond of fun and all sorts of boyish mischief, and of making queer experiments with strange things that he bought at the chemist's.

One night in winter, when it was very

dark, after the little ones had all been safely tucked up in their cosy beds, and the light taken away, they were very much startled when they saw on the wall opposite their bed strange figures and words like fire burning there.

Soon after, their brother came in with his hands and face fiery too. But as he spoke to them they knew his voice at once, and then were not afraid.

He had to tell them that both the writing and figures of strange things on the wall had been done by him. He had got some phosphorus, and done it before they came to bed, but when there was a light in the room it did not shew at all, and as he knew they would see it as soon as Alice or mother carried the light away, he had come up to listen at their door, and had made his hands and face shine with the fiery stuff too, just for a piece of mischief.

When the little ones knew what it was of course they were no longer afraid, but I think rather liked the shining wall, and thought how clever their brother must be to do such wonderful things.

After that Daisy did not much like to be in the dark alone, and if ever she was sent upstairs for anything in the evening, when

it was dark, she would be as quick as ever she could. She did not know that we are just as safe in the dark as in the light, and she did not know either that they are both alike to God, so that He sees us just as well at night, when there is not a single gleam of light around us, as He does in the noon-day with the glorious sun shining full upon us.

But Daisy knew nothing of all this, and she lay still in bed, and did not venture into the dark corridor to call Alice ; so the stars shone out in the summer sky, and the little birdies in the trees and hedges put their heads under their warm downy wings, and were soon all fast asleep.

Before long the children of the farm were fast asleep too, and the stars twinkled and gleamed in the sky above them, and seemed to be telling to those who would listen that as their bright eyes seemed to keep watch over the earth, so "the eyes of the Lord were in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

CHAPTER XI.

LEAVING HOME FOR THE GREAT CITY.

LONG before the day broke next morning, some of the children in the long corner room at the farm were talking in loud whispers to each other as they lay curled up in bed. Their father and mother's bedroom was next to theirs, and they knew that they must not talk too loudly or they would be heard, and then mother would be vexed with them.

As soon as it was light, Daisy was anxious to get up, and begin to get her things together for packing. But she was obliged to wait, for she found some of them were downstairs, and she tried to pass the time till seven o'clock by getting a book to read.

But all the time the thought of the journey, her first by train, and then of the strange city she would soon see, and

the many places that she would go to, all crowded into her mind, and she did not know much of what she was reading.

After a long time they heard some of the men come into the farm-yard, and then the rattle of the milk-pails, that told them the cows would soon be milked, so jumping out of bed they stood at the window and looked out to see it all. Daisy saw her father pass by on his way to the yard, and then old Peggy went to the pond to drink, and the chickens began to make their way out into the sunshine, and were soon pecking over the hay and straw, scattered here and there, in search of an early breakfast.

They were not fed yet, but found many a seed or grain of corn, or early worm; so on they went, pecking away as busily as if it were the business of their lives, and when we think of it, I suppose it is a part of their business, and they were not at all lazy about it.

Here from the window the children can see a large old hen followed by ten or eleven fluffy yellow and brown little chicks, only a few days old. How eagerly the good old hen scratches among the rubbish of straw and twigs, and loudly says, "Cluck, cluck, cluck," to call all her pretty

little brood to eat the seeds she has found for them.

The old cat walks quietly by; how she sets up her feathers and flies in front of her little ones, as if to say puss is not going to get one of them while she is there. We cannot then help thinking of the Lord's loving words to the very people who afterwards nailed Him to the cross, or agreed that others should do so, which was just as bad.

As the Lord thought of all the sad things that would one day come upon the people of Jerusalem, He said to them, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." The next time you see a hen with her little ones running under the warm downy wings, where they can be safe and happy, just see if you can remember this text.

Well, the children were so taken up with what was going on in the farm-yard that Alice came to call them before they thought it was nearly time. Soon they were dressed, and eating the nice breakfast that was always ready for them without any trouble on their part. And now they begin to talk again about the journey, and what

time they are to start. Some one, I think, was rather sorry to hear that they were not to go until after tea, when it would be cooler and much nicer for travelling than in the middle of the day.

As dear mother is going to take them, she has a great many things to arrange, even though she will only be away one night. First of all, this morning there was churning to be done, and now the sweet yellow lumps in the churn are to be made up into shape. Some are packed in wet cloths and cool leaves from the garden, and then stood on the slab ready to go to London, for aunt and grandma, who say no such butter is to be had there as that which is made in the dairy of Manor Farm.

Then some fruit is to be picked to go too, and the children help to get it ; and as the haymaking will all be over before Daisy comes back, they all go out for an hour's run and play there, and as often as they have been they never seem to get tired of the hayfield, the tossing and tumbling in the dry grass, and trying to bury one another under it.

Now as the mowers are cutting the last little piece this summer the children see one of them stoop down and pick something

up out of the grass which he has just cut.

"Look! he has found a nest," is the cry, and they are all very quickly standing round the man looking at a pretty little nest that his scythe has torn up out of a small hollow in the ground. There are five little tiny larks in the nest, and they are all holding up their funny yellow beaks, and opening their hungry mouths as if they were looking for the food their mother brings them. Over the heads of the mower and the children flutters the poor mother, high up in the sunshine, but not singing its clear lovely song now, but with short sharp cries of distress, darting to and fro to see what will happen to her poor little brood.

Before long the nest is in the hands of our little friends, and they go and put it down with great care in a sunny place in the hedge, where they think the mother will find it again and come and feed them. Then they go away and leave the nest there, for they know the old bird will not come while they are near. After this they go round the ditches to get some of the wild flowers that Connie is so fond of, the bright blue forget-me-not, and the wild clematis, and the wild rose, and the leaves

of the hedge-row oak that are so red and pretty. By the time Alice comes again and shouts to them across the meadow to come into dinner, they have a large bunch of the best the hedges and ditches can give.

After dinner Daisy is told to bring her odd little treasures to mother, to see if they are really to go, and though a good many are sent back, some are left and go in with the frocks and pinafores that she will need while away.

When the packing is over, comes the dressing, and the garden frock is changed for her new one, and when she was all ready except hat and jacket and gloves, Daisy is told she is to get a book or work and be quiet till mother has early tea before they start. At length all is ready, and father comes in, for he is going to drive them to the station some miles away, and they now come round the tea table, and there are a few minutes only given to tea; then Will says he can hear Peggy's trot, and soon Connie and Daisy are mounted in their carriage waiting for father and mother.

Then bags and baskets are packed under the seat, and father gets up and at once Peggy is off; there is no whip, for she never needs one, a shake of the reins is all

Peggy gets, and it would perhaps be hardly safe to touch her with a whip, anyhow she never gets it now. As fast as a horse can go, she carries them swiftly to the town, and then on to the station.

Here Daisy's eyes can hardly take in the many things she sees for the first time. What a funny place the station seems, and such a number of steps to get to the platform, and then the train with the boxes for people to get into, and numbers on the doors, that, Connie tells her, shew what class they are.

But at last a man rings a great bell just at the back of her, then they say good-bye to father, and enter one of the carriages, and are soon whirling by the fields, houses, and gardens, really on the way at last.

Connie's week at the farm is over, leaving her looking browner and healthier than when she came there; and Daisy's week from home has begun, and however many times she may go away again, none will ever be like this first journey: seeing the same things next time will be quite different. Station after station was passed, and at last they came to the one where they hoped to meet their uncle and drive home with him.

As the train came to a standstill, Daisy

and Connie looked eagerly out, but there were so many people they could see none but strangers.

As they got out of the train they heard a voice they knew, and in a moment their uncle, or rather Daisy's uncle, was taking some of their parcels, and after a few kind words, leading them out to the road where Cousin Will was seeing that the horse did not get into trouble.

In half an hour more Daisy and her mother were safe at the house in London of which she had thought so much.

Now I am not going to tell you of all the wonderful things she saw there, nor even about the cousins she had never seen before, or the kind aunt who made her little niece feel at home at once; but I will just give you a little picture of Daisy some days after her mother had left her.

Grandma was kind enough to say she would take the little girls to a very nice place, where there were some beautiful grounds laid out, and a museum of foreign things of almost every kind, and very much they had enjoyed it. As their uncle drove them there, they were to return by train, the station was quite close to the grounds, only parted from them by a very long wide passage way, the floor of which was boarded

by planks that did not quite join. You will see in a minute why I am telling you this.

Grandma and the three little girls were all going to the train after staying for some hours seeing the different things, and the beautiful grounds, and the lake with strange foreign birds floating on it.

Well, the children were all told to keep close to their grandma, as a great many people passed up and down the passage to the train, and so they did for some time, but when they were half way there, Daisy kicked her foot against something, and looking down she saw a fine large nut wedged tightly in between the boards and then she forgot what her grandma had said, and at once stooped down to get the nut out, but she could not move it, and after several tugs at it she had to give it up.

But oh! she looked up to go on with her cousins; what a fright she was in, for she could see them nowhere!

In that instant all the horror of being *lost* swept over her. She will never forget how terrified she was, but in a few seconds she ran on looking for her friends. The passage was quite crowded, and on and on she went, her heart beating so, she could hardly breathe. After a few steps more

however, she saw her grandma, and was soon by her cousin's side.

That little time when she knew what it felt to be lost will never be forgotten, and if the thought of being lost in a strange place here was so terrible, what must it be to be lost for ever.

I want all of those little friends who read "A Week at the Manor Farm" to remember that God says they are even now LOST, unless they believe on His Son as their Saviour, who loves and takes care of them. But at the same time He tells them that His Son, the Son of man, "has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

L. T.

London: Gospel Tract Depôt, 20, Paternoster Square, E.C.