

OLD ROSIE;

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

BY REV. M. GUY PEARSE.



HE lived away in such a queer little place, that I am sure you could not find it unless I took you there.

Come then, over the fields, and across the strange and awkward Cornish stiles—granite stones stretched across a ditch, into which little legs would sometimes slip, as they tried to step over. Through three fields, and then you came out into a lane that went by the pleasant name of the Lover's Lane. But it made all the difference what season of the year it was. In summer, nothing could be more beautiful. The hazel bushes were thick with the 'lambs' tails,' and the fluffy 'goslings' peeped out amongst them. The honeysuckle scented all the air, and trailed its flowers about amongst the thick briars and wild roses. The ferns grew luxuriantly on both sides, and the primroses and violets were so thick that you could scarcely see anything of their soft mossy bed. Then there was the nodding foxglove, where the bee crept and came out dusted with gold; and lower down grew the dainty lords and ladies. There Spring came first, and there Summer always lingered last. But when the Autumn rains came it was dreadful—mud, mud, mud! You never saw such mud. The cart-ruts went down ever so deep; and it was no use trying to pick your way, for whilst you were thinking where to step next, you would have sunk in so far that the mud almost pulled your boot off as you tried to draw your foot out again.

And yet as I look back to those days it seems always to have been sunshine whenever we went to see Old Rosie. I suppose it used to rain there sometimes, as it does in other places. I suppose sometimes the wind blew cold, and that the dull grey clouds shut out the

sun. But I can't remember any such times. It was always sunshine, and always a warm delicious day, when we went to see Old Rosie. I expect the reason was that we had the sunshine in our hearts; and that makes sunshine all about us, you know.

A little way along the lane, then round by an old withered tree, and past a green pond where the ducks washed and dived and stood up on their tails, flapping and splashing themselves; past the ricks and straw-yard of a farm, where we look through the gate at the frisking calves, or at the solemn horses, who seemed to know it was Sunday, and found it such a treat to stand quite still, almost too lazy to switch off the troublesome flies; then you came to a row of poor cottages. Three of them had pleasant little gardens, but the fourth had got squeezed in between two others. Lower than they were, and very small, it looked as if it were a poor timid little place that had come between the two well-to-do neighbours by saying that it was very little and wouldn't be in the way at all, and would keep back out of sight, and would not presume to have a garden. A narrow strip led to the narrow doorway; there was no room for a window on either side, but there was just one little window that kept a sharp look-out over it; then came the thick heavy thatch of the roof. But if there were no flowers in front, they made up for it by climbing all over the little house itself. Jessamine and monthly roses clustered round the doorway and hung about the windows; and on the thatch grew patches of white and yellow stonecrop, and the ivy climbed up from behind somewhere, and half hid the chimney itself.

Before we can knock at the door it is opened for us by the woman who keeps the house, for she always expects us after the morning service. We will leave with her the little presents of tea and whatever else there is for Old Rosie, and will go up the narrow staircase. If you were not such little folks, you would have to stoop all the way, or get such a bump on the head as many other people have got going up there.

(Continued in our next.)