

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

Farmer Hollis was very busy up to nearly eight o'clock, and then he turned his steps towards home to breakfast. As he came in sight of the house the postman appeared in the opposite direction, and they met at the gate. Tom took the letter from him, paid the postage, said a few words about the fine day, and walked on, breaking the seal as he went.

His wife was waiting for him. "Have you got a letter?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, giving it to her; "I don't know who it's from; perhaps it's about the cow."

Mrs. Hollis uttered such a loud exclamation, that her husband thought she was ill. "What is the matter?" he cried.

"Oh, Tom, she's alone in London, and dying."

"Who—what, Susan?" he asked, taking the letter. The first words he read made his hands tremble and his heart beat. It was not a long letter, and ran thus:—

"Mrs. Brown, of Holland Place, Piccadilly, London, writes to Mr. Hollis to tell him his sister is dangerously ill at her house. Come directly if you want to see her alive."

"I must go, Susan. What time is it? I must catch the coach."

"I doubt you will be too late, Tom. It's just gone eight, and the coach is due at the White Horse at Welwyn by nine o'clock."

"I shall do it."

"You'll have to walk. If John wasn't in the far field he might saddle the cob."

"I shall manage it, Susan. Tie me up a bundle of things, and I'll change these clothes and put on my best. If only I can see my Nelly once more!"

Ten minutes later Tom had blessed his wife and children, and was hurrying over the fields at a brisk trot. He had no time to think of his farm, or that he was leaving his wife, or that he disliked travelling; his one prayer was, "God grant that I may find the coach, and be in time to see poor Nelly."

One more field had to be crossed, one more stile to be jumped, and the high road which commanded the White Horse would be reached. Onward Tom went, and caught a glimpse of the coach; but it was just starting. He ran at full speed, and cried "Stop!" at the top of his voice, and waved his stick aloft. The guard was mounting behind. He hoped he would turn round and see him. It was his last chance. The old dog Rover's face was towards him; but all eyes were fixed on the coach.

As the guard took his seat, he noticed Tom's stick, and the latter caught sight of the guard's uplifted hand. "Thank God for that!" he ejaculated.

Some hours later Tom reached his sister. She was tended by her kind landlady, who told him the doctor gave no hope. "Where is she?" was all Tom managed to stammer out.

The meeting between the brother and sister, so long

separated, was sad enough; very few words passed at first.

Nelly seemed scarcely able to speak. She revived a little, and by degrees recounted her sorrowful story to Tom, and told him he was right and she was wrong.

"Why did you not come back to me when you were left alone?" he asked.

"I was not alone. I had one boy, a darling; I lived for him, and worked for him; he died a few months ago, and then, Tom, I had only one wish, that was to see you again. But I was very ill, and thought I should never get to England alive. When you have told me you can forgive me, I can die in peace."

"Forgive you, Nelly, I did that years ago; you will not die, you will live to see the old home, and the children and Susan, and we will love you back into health."

"No, Tom, that cannot be. I have only a few hours more. I am quite happy now I have seen you, for I love Jesus, and for His sake God has forgiven me all my sins. Kiss me again and again, dearest brother. Good-bye—good night—come very near to me."

Tom bent down and raised his sister in his strong arms, and soothed her with words out of God's Book and his own loving heart. A great silence fell over the room, and before daylight fled, Nelly had gone to the land which is not so very far off.

THE LORD'S WALL.



ABOUT fifty years ago, one bitter winter night, the inhabitants of the little town of Schleswig were thrown into the greatest distress and terror. A hostile army was marching down upon them, and new and fearful reports of the doings of the lawless soldiers were hourly reaching the place.

While all hearts quaked with fear, an aged Christian passed her time in crying out to God that He would build a wall of defence around them.

Her grandson asked her why she prayed for a thing so entirely impossible; but she explained that she meant that God would protect her.

At midnight the dreadful tramp was heard; an enemy came pouring in at every avenue, filling the place to overflowing. But while the most fearful sounds were heard on every side, not even a knock came to their door, at which they were greatly surprised. The morning light made the matter clear, for just beyond the house the drifted snow had reared such a massive wall that it was impossible to get over to them.

"There," said the old woman, triumphantly, "do you see, my son, that God could raise up a wall around us! Truly, with God all things are possible."