

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.



As I was staying at a farm-house, I noticed an occurrence which interested me very much. It happened during my visit, which was early in the year, that there were a great many lambs, much to the gratification of my kind host, who hailed their growing numbers with great delight. For a day or two after their birth they were healthy, and seemed likely to do well; but a sharp cold wind set in, and it blew very hard into the shed where these lambs and

their mothers were, and one after another they sickened and died. It was in vain that the farmer spread around them nice, warm, clean straw, for still they continued ailing, and he was perplexed and grieved; the weather seemed to cripple and chill their poor little tender limbs, and they could not bear the cold cutting winds.

One morning, however, the farmer put on his great coat, and he went to the place where the poor moaning creatures were; and very soon after he was seen carrying two poor tremblers close in his arms, and holding them in his bosom. He came into the kitchen, he laid a piece of old flannel down before the fire, he wrapped the bleating lambs in it, he tenderly poured some warm milk into their mouths, and he rubbed them for some time with his hand. In fact, he did all for them he could, whilst he sat by and anxiously watched the effect of all his care.

Now all this attention reminded me of what the prophet Isaiah says of Jesus Christ, when he beautifully likens Him to a good shepherd. What does he say?

Search your Bible and read the 11th verse of the 40th chapter of Isaiah: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." How kind! how very kind!—Does it not strike your minds in this way? What does it mean? Why it means that He will take all needful care of them; He will defend them from the rough blasts of the piercing wind, from the attacks of ravenous beasts, and supply their every want. He will fold them in His compassionate arms, and He will warm and nourish them with all care.

Oh, if the little lambs felt as they should do, how grateful would they be! and if they were aware of their weakness, how eagerly would they run to this Good Shepherd that He might be a friend to them; and if you, dear children, who read this little book, if you knew and felt properly sensible of what poor wretched objects you must prove without a Saviour's love, how earnestly would you apply to Him, and how prayerfully would you seek Him! No

one can be such a friend to you as Jesus the Good Shepherd. What earthly friend would have died to save you? But Jesus willingly laid down His life for His sheep. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. And now He invites every wandering sinner to return to His fold. Reader, are you a wanderer? If so, return to the arms of Jesus, where you will be happy and safe from every danger. Are you one of His lambs? Cleave closely to Him. Listen to His voice, love Him, obey Him.

See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand
With all engaging charms;
Hark, how He calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in His arms.

"Permit them to approach," He cries,
"Nor scorn their humble name,
For 'twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came."

Ye little flock, with pleasure hear,
Ye children, seek His face;
And flee with transport to receive
The blessings of His grace.