

THE GREAT RAIN¹.



ONCE the whole world was drowned, yes, all the people in the world were drowned, and all the beasts and birds except one family, and a few beasts and birds with them. How did this happen? Did you ever hear about it?

It happened four thousand years ago. This world was full of people then, as it is now, and it was full of wicked people. The great God who made the world cannot bear wickedness; He looked down and saw the people fighting, and stealing, and killing each other. At last He said He would drown them all, except one good man, and his wife, and his children. The name of this man was Noah. God told Noah to build a great place called an ark. It was to be built so that it could float on the water like a ship, only it was not to have a mast or sails like a ship. The Ark was to be made of wood, and covered with pitch, and lined with pitch, to keep out the wet. There were to be three great rooms in the ark, one above the other, and there was to be a window at the top, and a door at the side. God told Noah to take some of all sorts of beasts and birds into the ark with him; but first he was to get food for them, such as hay for the horses, and seed for the birds.

When the ark was finished, God told Noah to go in, and to take the beasts and birds in with him. What a strange sight it must have been to see the beasts and birds going into the ark! If God had not made them quiet and obedient, Noah never could have brought them in.

Noah had three sons, and they had three wives, so that there were eight people who went into the ark.

None of the wicked people went in.

Noah had often begged them to repent and to turn to God, but they had not minded. They would not believe that they would at last be drowned.

¹ From *Streaks of Light* by Favell Lee Mortimer included in the *Mothers' Companion* available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>.

As soon as Noah was in the ark, God Himself shut the door.

No one could get into the ark after God had shut the door.

That day the rain began to pour down from the sky, and the water came up out of the ground. All that day it rained, and the next, and the next, and for nearly six weeks. Such rain was never seen before, nor ever will be seen again. Everybody was drowned, and every beast and every bird. If people climbed to the tops of the trees, the water soon reached them; and if they mounted the high hills, the waters at last covered them; there was no way of escaping from the anger of God. Once God would have heard the prayers of these sinners, but now it was too late - they were all drowned. For nearly a year Noah floated in his ark upon the waters.

Once he sent out a raven to see whether the land was dry, but the bird never came back.

Another time he sent out a dove, and this sweet bird came to the window again, and Noah put out his hand, and pulled her in. The poor little dove had found no bough on which to rest, and she liked to return to the ark, while the raven chose to fly about till the earth was dry.

Noah waited one week, and then he sent out the dove again, and this time she returned with the branch of an olive-tree in her beak; then Noah knew that the tops of the trees were seen. In another week he sent out his good little dove again, and this time she came back no more. Still Noah would not leave the ark till God told him.

At last God said to him, 'Go out of the ark with your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives, and the beasts, and the birds, and the creeping things.' Then they all went out.

How glad must the stag have been to bound once more in the forests! How glad must the eagle have been to soar once more in the air! And how sweetly the lark must have sung, as it flew out of the window, and saw again the bright sun!

But were beasts and birds as glad as Noah? Oh, no; he knew who had saved him from dying in the waters. He loved God for His goodness, and praised Him, and prayed to Him.

God promised He would never again drown the world, and He gave a sign that He would remember His promise; that sign you have seen, - it is the beautiful rainbow which shines in the sky when the sun is beginning to shine, and the showers are almost over. That rainbow puts us in mind of God's kindness to Noah.

But though the world will never be drowned again, something else still more dreadful will happen. It will be burned up! Who will be saved in that day? Only those who have believed in Jesus Christ. He died for our sins, that we might be saved.

See Gen. vi, vii, viii, and ix, 1- 17 ; 2 Peter, last chapter.