

MRS. BARBAULD

CHARLES' JOURNEY TO
FRANCE, AND OTHER
TALES

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STORY OF A JOURNEY TO FRANCE

Well, Charles, we will take a journey. We will go to France. We will see some of the world besides home.

Bring your hat. Good-bye, Papa. Farewell, Billy, and Harry, and every body. We are going a great way off. And we shall go down the lane, and through the church-yard and by the corner-house, and over the stile, till we have got quite into the fields. How pretty the fields will look! for it will be summer days again before we go. And there will be yellow flowers, and white flowers, and grass, and trees, and hedges; and the grasshoppers, will chirp, chirp, under our feet. Do not try to catch them; it will only hinder us, and we have a great way to go.

Pray what are those pretty creatures that look so meek and good-natured, and have soft thick white wool upon their backs, like a greatcoat, and make a noise like the little baby when it cries? Those are sheep and lambs. And what are those creatures

with horns, that are bigger than the sheep? Some of them are black, and some red: they make a loud noise, but they do not look as if they would hurt any body. Those are cows that give milk. Stroke them. Poor cows! stand still and look back. Now we cannot see papa's house at all; and we can see only the top of the church steeple. Let us go a little farther. Now look back. Now we cannot see the church at all. Farewell! We are going a great way. Shall we ever come back again? Yes, we shall come back again; but we must go on now. Come, make haste.

What is that tall thing that has four great arms which move very fast? I believe, if I was near it, they would strike me down. It is a wind-mill. Those arms are the sails. The wind turns them round. And what is a wind-mill for? It is to grind corn. You could have no bread if the corn were not ground. Well, but here is a river; how shall we do to get over it? Why, do you not see how those ducks do? they swim over. But I cannot swim. Then you must learn to swim, I believe: it is too wide to jump over. O, here is a Bridge! Somebody has made a bridge for us quite over the river. That somebody was very good, for I do not know what we should have done without it; and he was very clever too. I wonder how he made it. I am sure I could not make such a bridge.

Well, we must go on, on, on; and we shall see more rivers, and more fields, and towns bigger than our town a great deal – large towns, and fine churches, streets, and people – more than there is at the fair. And we shall have a great many high hills to climb. I believe I must get somebody to carry the little boy up

those high hills. And sometimes we shall go through dusty sandy roads; and sometimes through green lanes, where we shall hear the birds sing.

Sometimes we shall go over wide commons, where we shall see no trees, nor any house; and large heaths, where there is hardly any grass – only some purple flowers, and a few black nosed little sheep. Ha! did you see that pretty brown creature that ran across the path? Here is another; and look! there is another; there are a great many. They are rabbits. They live here, and make themselves houses in the ground. This is a rabbit-warren.

Now we are come amongst a great many trees – more trees than there are in the orchard by a great many, and taller trees. There is oak, and ash, and elm. This is a wood. What great boughs the trees have! like thick arms. The sun cannot shine amongst the trees, they are so thick. Look, there is a squirrel! Jumping from one tree to another. He is very nimble. What a pretty tail he has!

Well; when we have gone on a great many days, through a great many fields and towns, we shall come to a great deep water, bigger a great many times than the river, for you can see over the river, you know – you can see fields on the other side; but this is so large, and so wide, you can see nothing but water, water, as far as ever you can carry your eyes. And it is not smooth, like the river; it is all rough, like the great pot in the kitchen when it is boiling; and it is so deep, it would drown you, if you were as tall as two church steeples. I wonder what they call this great water? There is an old fisherman sitting upon a stone drying himself;

for he is very wet. I think we will ask him. Pray, fisherman, what is this great water? It is the sea: did you never hear of the sea? What! is this great water the same sea that is on our map at home? Yes, it is. Well, this is very strange! we are come to the sea that is in our map. But it is very little in the map. I can lay my finger over it. Yes; it is little in the map, because every thing is little in the map, the towns are little, and the houses are little.

Pray, fisherman, is there any thing on the other side of this sea? Yes; fields, and towns, and people. Will you go and see them? I should like to go very well; but how must we do to get over? for there is no bridge here. Do not you see those great wooden boxes that swim upon the water? They are bigger than all papa's house. There are tall poles in the middle, as high as a tree. Those are masts. See! now they are spreading the sails. Those white sheets are the sails. They are like wings. These wooden boxes are like houses with wings. Yes, and I will tell you what, little boy! they are made on purpose to go over the sea; and the wind blows them along faster than a horse can trot. What do they call them? They call them ships. You have seen a ship in a picture. Shall we get in? What have those men in the ship got on? They have jackets and trowsers on, and checked shirts. They are sailors. I think we will make you a sailor; and then instead of breeches you must have a pair of trowsers. Do you see that sailor, how he climbs up the ropes? He runs up like a monkey. Now he is at the top of the mast. How little he looks! but we must get in. Come, make haste: they will not stay for us. What are you

doing? picking up shells! We must get into a boat first, because the ship is not near enough. Now we are in.

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