

## MODERNISED NURSERY RHYME

The weary farmer trod his way from the fields back to his small homestead which was situated about a quarter of a mile from the little village of Lambleton. His horse was ahead of him plodding it's way back to his small stable where he would be fed and watered and left to himself until the morning came when once more he would be harnessed ready for another day's work. Both the farmer and his horse had been hard at it harrowing; the continuous steady plod up and down the ploughed field dragging the metal spikes which settled a fine even tilth for the seeds to be planted. There was a simple understanding between the two with the seasonal workload that they undertook, for they provided for themselves and most of the surrounding locales with grains for flour.

As well as that field, the farmer also had a small flock of sheep which were two-fold in their use, giving both meat and wool. The flock was fairly simple to contend with, all that needed to be defined was ensuring that the sheep understood the boundaries that they were to live within. It was this flock that was in the front of the farmer's mind as he took the bridle and tack off his horse and rubbed him down with handfuls of straw. Leaving oats and water in the stall, he then made his weary way to his small cottage where he sluiced his hands, face and body under the water pump. He entered the cottage where his wife had been waiting for him. He gave her a quick peck on the cheek and went to the table as he always did where there would have been his evening meal laid ready for him. The table was empty!

He looked up amazed at his wife who stood there twisting the end of her apron backwards and forwards. 'Well?' the farmer enquired, 'where's my meal?' His wife continued wringing her apron and eventually answered, 'please don't get angry Joseph, I'm sure things will be alright'. At these words Joseph turned and looked hard at his wife and then noted that their daughter was cowering in the corner of the room. 'What's she doing here, why isn't she at work,' he growled, 'I decide when I go and fetch her for her meal not her!'

'Dad', cried the girl, 'I can't find them,' she blurted, 'I've searched and searched and there's no sign of them, neither in the top field or down by the brook, I couldn't think where else to look for them,' and the poor girl burst into tears and rushed and caught hold of her comforting mother!

'So, I've spent a whole hard-working day out in the fields, shouted the farmer, 'and come home only to find that my daughter Bo who had the simplest of simple jobs on a farm, to find that she couldn't even do that' he exclaimed! He took a

deep breath trying to control his rising temper, but had to go on, 'worse still she has lost my sheep!' The mother cuddled her daughter even closer as the huge roaring voice stopped for a moment, but it continued, after taking a huge breath, just as loudly. 'You're just as daft as that boy Jack; he was supposed to be looking after the sheep and what does he do, he goes to sleep under a haystack!' The farmer stopped and strode around the small room his boots resounding on the tiles trying to pacify himself. He had partially succeeded, for the other young boy's stupidity had mellowed his attitude somewhat, but he still went starkly on, 'mind you he's twice as bad as you - he had sheep and cattle to look after and what did they do, they ate their way through the meadow and the corn.'

Joseph's voice by this time had risen again, and both Mrs Peep and her daughter Bo were in floods of tears and clinging to each other! Joseph sighed. He controlled himself, he'd vented his wrath, and sense had returned to the room. 'Well I'd better leave my meal until later!' He announced, 'I'm going to have to go and search for those sheep that you were so carefully watching!' He spoke with much sarcasm, then turned and marched to the door, and with a withering look at both, grasped the door handle.

As he did so from outside there was a faint bleating. Joseph looked up with surprise and then so did Mrs Peep and her daughter. They all held their breath and Joseph opened the door and carefully walked out followed by the two females and there, they saw a gently trotting flock of sheep making it's way towards the farm.

The farmer just stood. He almost couldn't believe his eyes, the flock ambled it's way towards him and settled in front of him.

'I did tell Bo not to be too worried,' quietly informed Mrs Peep, 'for I had a feeling that they would find their own way home', 'and they've brought their tails behind them too mother,' remarked her daughter!!'

Joseph relaxed. His shoulders fell and gradually a series of chuckles started which turned into guffaws that soon racked his body. A high sense of relief went through them all and they followed Joseph's example and giggled and laughed.

Joseph gasped between guffaws, 'come on then you two, let's all go and find something to eat.'