Reminiscences of Swindon and the Jefferies' family written by Richard Jefferies' cousins: Fanny Catherine Hall (aged 87) and Florence (Hall) Bott (aged 81) for their nieces.

First of all some background history of the Hall family
Martha Hall was Richard Jefferies' father's sister. Martha was born on 12th July 1818 and baptized on 15th May 1882 at Holy Rood church, Swindon. She was the daughter and 6th child of John and Fanny (Ridger) Jefferies. On 30th June 1849 she married William George Hall. He was an accountant born on 8th September 1815 in Longford, County Wicklow, Ireland and the son of Joseph Hall, Gent. of Longford. In 1863 he was the Secretary of the Swindon Permanent Building Society. They lived in Wood Street when first married (1851 census) and then 8 Prospect Place (1861 census), North Street (1871) but had a house built in The Sands (now Bath Road, Old Town, Swindon) (1881 census) and named it Longford Villa.

Longford Villa, with Martha and William Hall by the gate

William died on 30th August 1898 at Longford Villa, aged 83 years, and was buried on 2nd September 1898 at Christchurch, Swindon. Martha died on 22nd January 1902 at Longford Villa, aged 84 years. She was also buried in Christchurch on 28th January 1902.

Martha (Jefferies) Hall aged 72

William Hall

They had the following children:

Fanny Catherine, born on 5th November 1850, baptised on 1st December 1850 at Holyrood Church and lived in Wood Street. She never married and died in 1937.

Circa 1890

Emily was born on 1st February 1852 and baptised on 29th February 1852 at Christchurch, Swindon. She also lived in Wood Street, presumably with her sister Fanny. She married William Sewell of Longtown, Carlisle on 7th July 1880 at Christchurch. William was born on 19th February 1849 and was the nephew of George Sewell – Richard Jefferies' uncle. The couple had 4 children and lived at 2, Lansdown Rd. The reminiscences were written for 2 of the children.

1. Helen Mabel (Lewis) b. 27 April 1881 at Purton (died 1946). Married Albert Joseph Lewis (1881- 1946) of Gloucester at Christchurch on 16 September 1908. Address given in 1915 military records: 53 Goddard Ave, Lawns.
2. Margaret Elizabeth known as Daisy, (unmarried) b. 4 October 1882 d. 21 April 1909 (aged 26). Buried at Christ Church.
3. Kenneth William Robert (Kenny) b. 8 March 1886 died in Lagos, Nigeria of Blackwater Fever (9th or 20th January 1926 – aged 39). Joined up in S. America on outbreak of Great War. Fought with the Royal Engineers in France.
4. Kathleen Mary (unmarried) b. 8 March 1886. Died 1964. Buried Christchurch.

Clockwise from left-hand corner: Kathy, Emily (mother), Mabel, William (father), Margaret (Daisy)and Kenny

Joseph was born on 2nd January 1854 and baptised on 6th January 1854 at Christchurch. He lived in Wood St. 1871 census living at Longford Villa & 1881 – Paddington working as railway clerk. 1926 wrote (to RJ's son) a reminiscence of RJ when he recounted chaperoning his cousin at his Grandfather's house. He never married .

Joseph with sister Emily, 1890

Florence Eliza was born on 18th June 1856 and baptised on 17th July 1856 at Christchurch. She was married on 18th June 1883 to (Thomas) William Bott (b. 1 October 1856 in Swindon). She died on 1st January 1939 at East Sheen and is buried in East Sheen cemetery. They had 3 children: Florence Leonore (Tuckwell), Alan Longford and Vera May.

Florence 1890

William George. Born 26 April 1858. Bapt.30th July 1858 at Christchurch, Swindon. Qualifications: MRCS, LSA. 1881 census at Longford Villa as a medical student. Unmarried. Died 24 October 1899 aged 41 years. Buried in the Jefferies' Family Vault at Holy Rood, Swindon.

John Jefferies (known as Jack) Born 4 July 1862. Bapt. 30th July 1862 at Christchurch, Swindon. Living 8,Prospect Terrace, Swindon. Married Mary Isabel Matthews (born 1865 in India) on 15 December 1887 at Christ Church, 1891 census living with parents with his wife. Mechanical Draughtsman. Lived for a while in Kurseong, India. 5 children: Ethel Mary, Winifred May Jefferies, Margaret (Newman), Queenie and Dorothy.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REMINISCENCES OF FANNY CATHERINE HALL (1850 -1939)

written for her nieces, Mabel (Mrs. Helen Mabel Lewis) and Kathleen (Miss Kathleen Mary Sewell) in 1937, aged 87.

Swindon, Wiltshire, 80 years ago and more [was] then a country town with few excitements and perhaps a somewhat exalted opinion of its importance over the then young and struggling suburb at its foot.

Swindon Town is now[1] much altered in appearance. When I first recollect things, there were two cottages in Wood St. with a narrow border of flowers and palings, and on a portion of the spot now occupied by the Corn Exchange[2], were some picturesque gardens and pretty cottages. There was also a grim-looking house standing far back from the road in Wood St. nearly opposite where a jeweller's shop is now.

There was a small general grocer's shop also at the top of Wood St., where a Mr. and Mrs. Knapp sold, among other things, slate pencils, then used in all schools, with their distinctive scratchings on slates. The old couple must have been pretty "warm," as their two sons, William and Edwin each set up in business - one at the top of Wood St., and the other at the bottom, in quite big shops.

The principal boot and shoe maker was Mr. Ball, who had a large family, with whom ours was somewhat intimate. Further down the streets lived a Mr. Frampton (Builder) also with several children; and somewhat lower, at Mr. Pruce, Hairdresser, a most cantankerous fellow, who often made me squirm on pronouncing on the coarseness of my hair! His wife was a tall, handsome woman who presided over the toy shop, the only one of its kind in town. Opposite was the famous confectioners, Mr. Prinbury's – whose succulent buns and cheesecakes were things to be remembered.

The Goddard Arms was, and is, the premier hotel, though The Bell and & the King's Arms now run it somewhat close. Where there is now a toyshop in High Street was formerly a Music Shop, kept by a real old character, Isaac Ann. His 3 daughters and 2 of his sons were all more or less musical, but the daughters were lacking in beauty of form or feature. I remember how convulsed with laughter my brother Joe was on the occasion when they sang at some "Penny Readings," – "We are a happy family/ we are, we are, we are."

Where the Wilts and Gloucester Bank now stands derelict, lived an old white-haired gentleman Mr. Joseph Gay – whose brother John, with his son John were the principal doctors in my young days.

Where now is a large garage – once lived Mr. J.H. Shepherd, a wine merchant, I think. He was a cheery looking individual, who always wore a grey top-hat – whilst his old father came out in a white beaver one. Then there was the draper's shop kept by a Mr. Matthews, where antiques are now offered to the public – exactly opposite my grandfather's big old place, of which more anon.

Prospect has altered considerably too. When we first went there in about 1855, the "Terrace" faced a large strip of land let out in gardens. My

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[1] 1937

[2] The Corn Exchange opened in 1866

father secured a fine portion and was a very successful cultivator. Then when we moved from No. 5 to No. 8 (afterwards called 6 North St. it being a corner house with front door in that street) it faced a long array of allotment gardens. We used to call the pathway to New Swindon, the 'three hills' – first the gardens, then a gateway, the second hill being between green fields – then another barrier and fields again, terminating with a stone stile. There was a little copse at the top of the last field on the left going down, and I recollect my delight on finding there one 29th May, a fine oak–apple!

Soon the Building Mania began. We did not at all like to see a big inn put up in a portion of our dear old garden – then other houses arose and the allotments were speedily covered with many houses and streets. We were delighted when Longford Villa, The Sands[3] was built by our father – and we moved into a better locality, with more space for our activities and a splendid garden.

My parents were regular attendants at the Parish Church (Christ Church) and for years we filled Row No. 9 (north Aisle). The services were much longer than at the present time. We used to sing in the metrical version, of the Psalms when I first went, with their many dull tunes – but soon had hymns. Bickersteth's Psalmody being later superseded by Hymns Ancient and Modern. I believe it was on the death of Prince Albert in 1861 that the pulpit was entirely covered in dense black cloth. The first organist I remember was Mr. Richardson – then followed Mr. Cammidge – and later, Mr. Whitehead. Mr. H.G. Baily Junr. occasionally favoured us – and Mr Bambridge of Marlborough College delighted us with his performance on the organ…[4]

The National School was used on Sunday mornings. Dear Miss Jenner took her afternoon class at her own beautiful house in Cricklade Street. In summer time we were taught under the spreading branches of a fine mulberry tree, – and sometimes the dear kind old lady would take us through the conservatory. The house is now turned into offices, and the garden?

[My] first school [was] kept by a Miss Preece at No 2. Prospect Terrace. It was a mixed school of all ages from a dot of 4 to a huge boy of 14 or 15. [My] second school [was] kept by a Mrs. Haines – the wife of a jeweller in the town, whose private house was in Victoria St, now turned into the offices of the old Advertiser and North Wilts Herald. [My] Third School: for one quarter I was sent to Moredon House School, near Swindon, as a boarder. The Principals, Mrs. Large and Miss Cox and the second-in-command was a personal friend of Mother's…[5]

I feel I must say something about our grandfather's house at Swindon. It has long since passed from the family, and has been converted into two shops. When I was young it was a very important place to us children; so I will try to give some impressions of it. A large, rambling place, it held a mysterious charm for us all. Built 3 sides of a square – the fourth being occupied by sheds of sorts – and a large back door leading out into the Square. On one side were the kitchen and outhouses: on another the best

[3] Now Bath Road
[4] Then follows further details of vicars and curates
[5] There follows accounts of further schooling in Marlborough, Deal, and of teaching appointments

parlour – over it the best bedroom – and an alcove leading out from which were three bedrooms facing the street, as well as a large front-room – with a delightful window looking up the whole length of High Street. A storey higher, 3 more bedrooms – one of them approached by a tortuous passage – and another with steps leading down to it – with mysterious trapdoors – from which we were all excluded.

The dining room usually called "Grandpa's Room" was pleasant, and we liked it because high up in a corner cupboard was kept a plentiful supply of sugar candy in a wooden bowl. There were two staircases – one leading from the kitchen had the bedroom occupied by grandfather – then came a largish space in which stood a big box-mangle – which I recollect seeing the Aunts and maid using laboriously – and on which I recollect seeing collected once about 20 or 30 huge straw bonnets evidently being turned out during a spring-clean.

Then came a long, dark passage which we usually scrambled through as speedily as possible – then another stairway leading down to the huge bakehouse itself – and so to the ground floor again.

Grandfather was very literary and he had a really remarkable family. They all received a good education and several of them were much in advance of their era. The fourth son, John Luckett[6] was an artist and music-lover, the special favourite of my mother, who considerably helped him in his career. Then Mother[7] herself, a remarkably intelligent and intellectual woman, had a good school of her own, which she gave up on the birth of her third child – the long wished-for boy.[8] My father was so disappointed that I was not of the other sex that I was nearly called "Josephine," instead of bearing the names of my two grandmothers. I remember once, as a young troublesome child, being pulled from the jaws of the machinery of the "Old Mill," now nothing but a memory itself. There is an old legend extant that I was never taught my A.B.C.; that when Mother began, she found that I knew them all! It appears that the nursemaid used to take her charges into Holy Rood churchyard, and that, as I went from tomb to tomb, she taught me to read! However that may be, I do recollect standing by my grandfather at the age of 4 and reading to him out of a New Testament (I can visualise its brown cover now) and being given a crown piece for my pains.

Our principal excitements were the Fairs and Circus. On such occasions we were all asked down to Grandfather's, to see all out of the big front-room window. I first experienced a real fright on going through the Fair – with the maid – I saw in front of a booth a strange masked figure dressed in green and dancing madly – Oh! I was scared and did not recover till safe up into that dear old front room.

Aunt Sarah[9] was a stern disciplinarian – I had a bad habit evidently of putting my elbows on the meal–table, and after warnings I distinctly remember the tearing of my arms by a huge carpet–pin, stuck into the cloth. No doubt I deserved it – but it was a bit drastic. Then my fat curls –

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[6] John Luckett: born 1st September 1824
[7] Martha born on 12th July 1818
[8] Joseph born on 2nd January 1854
[9] Saraj Jefferies was born on 3rd March 1820. Unmarried, she lived with her parents at the bakery.

done up in rags nightly – would come out sometimes – a straight lock of hair hanging down – this must have annoyed my Aunt greatly, for on one occasion when staying there on a short visit – she took me to the hairdresser and had my hair cut shortish. My Mother happened to come down the same evening, and did not at all approve. Still, I have very pleasant recollections of the old Bakehouse in spite of the savage old tortoise-shell cat which seemed specially fond of attacking the bare legs of children – though grandfather himself was much attached to the animal.

Little Aunt Sewell[10] was always very kind and saved the riotous ones of us from many a scrape, we all loved her.

I hope I have not tired out my dear nieces with my fragmentary reminiscences and trust that what I have put down may interest in some small degree, the younger generation.

[10] Eliza (Jefferies) Sewell was born on 18th August 1813

Extracts from the reminiscences of Florence Bott, daughter of Martha and William Hall, written for her nieces Mrs. Helen Mabel Lewis (nee Sewell) and Miss Kathleen Mary Sewell. 1937. Mrs. Bott was then aged 81.

After writing about the absence of indoor sanitation, 80 or so years previous. … "The one big house of Swindon, 'The Lawn', then the seat of Ambrose Lethbridge Goddard Esq., was in the same condition; rich and poor houses were all alike, and to point the moral in this year of 1937, this house now lies derelict and condemned – it has still no main drainage!"

Servants were plentiful and cheap but few could either read or write. They were mostly pleasant girls who stayed for years. Telegrams were unknown, and later, when they did come, they were principally signals of death or disaster – I hate them to this day. The postman, (there was only one) was a personal friend of every household, his name was ROBERT GOODMAN.

There were no fish shops; what fish we had came round on hand-carts, and was a great treat, and though you'd scarcely believe it, was quite fresh enough to eat! The fish was mostly of the cheaper kind, salmon being a luxury, and only obtainable when Father went to London

Prinbury, the one confectioner, sold the most delicious cakes and buns, made of real butter, no margarine, Trex or Spry in those days. He was an elegant old man with two very refined daughters, and a nephew George, who greatly smitten with Emily, who refused to smile on him.

There was a Holy Well, on Drove Road, near the Church Fields,[11] and another Spring on the Wroughton Road that was celebrated for its pure and sparkling water. Aunt Sarah[12] used to visit it constantly to bathe her eyes.

This Spring was diverted or lost when the Marlborough Railway[13] was built, and the other was closed when laid-on water became general.

I must mention here what an extremely unusual family, for the time, my Mother's was. Her father was merely a baker you will say, but he was also a well-educated and intelligent man who had to give up his printing and publishing to take over, from his father, the flourishing baking business in Swindon. It soured him, and rankled in all his family who were unsatisfied, rather morose, and inclined to be melancholy, that is, the male members. The women were alert, well-read, intelligent and full of character.

Mother, for example, was extremely well-read, a good French scholar, and an excellent pianist, a beautiful writer with great breadth of expression, and of handsome, commanding presence.

She gave her firstborn, Fanny, an insight into all the well–worth poets and writers, and Fan can, to this day, find an apt quotation for any subject that comes up (often in these days received with the blank stare of ignorance, despite all our High Schools). She can recite such poems as Gray's "Elegy," or pages of "Paradise Lost," (awful things!); whole chapters of the Bible.

[11] The present Churchfields School, adjoining this site is named after them.
[12] Sarah Jefferies 1820 – 1864
[13] The Midland and South Western Junction Line started 1875

She must have had a receptive mind. Emily was not like that, and I came fourth, and was not so well looked after. I can truthfully say this – that in our present circle of middle-class wives of well-to-do tradesmen, bank managers, clergy etc, there is not a woman who is a patch on my mother for learning or breeding.

The one thing I have against her is she was too retiring – not fond enough of society for her family's sake, so her unusual talents were unknown outside her family circle, and consequently they did not hold the position in the growing town which was rightly theirs.

Grandma Jefferies[14] I never saw, but the tales of her kindness and beauty are a legend in the family.

Uncle John[15] died before I can remember him, but he comes down to us as a romantic figure, good-looking, elegant. He played the piano and guitar and, had he lived, he would have been an artist – but, alas, he was marked down by consumption, as we called it then, and died early.

Aunt Cox[16] was definitely Miss Jefferies, the eldest of the family, born in 1812, considered very good-looking, and her father's favourite. She spoilt her chances by marrying a poor farmer, but she was always an outstanding personality, and though she had to work very hard, never lost her individuality.

Aunt Sewell[17] married a dour Scotchman, a tailor, whom none of the family ever liked, but she was a dainty little lady, never said or did a vulgar thing, and was truly, loved by us all.

Uncle Jefferies[18] (James Luckett) was a mixed character, sometimes he would take us children, around the fields and show us intimate and delightful things in the hedgerow. Sometimes he would wear an ear of corn in his buttonhole, and if asked why, would expatiate on its beauty. How much squarer and longer and fatter the ears were than in his boyhood days. Then they looked more like rye-grass, and he was proud of the downland farmers who selected and bred from the best of straws, and could produce the wheat we see today. He always carried several ears in his pocket and when the children accompanied him on his lazy stroll round the fields, we all had one under his directions, rubbed it between palms, blew away the chaff, and munched away happily. "A man could go all day," he said, "on a handful of corn and a drink of water."

One day, he caught an adder, the <u>island</u> was full of them, pinched its neck and made it open its mouth, to show us it was not the quivering forked tongue that was the danger, but the sharp tooth further back in the jaw. He could always find us the wren's little hooded nest, and was the first to spot the lovely blue hedge-sparrow's eggs; but the eggs of thrushes and blackbirds were <u>never</u> taken. He had a pet blackbird in the rickyard that used to come <u>running</u> when he whistled a certain stave. He usually had a bit of bacon for it. Sometimes we sat in fear and never dared to speak, and he didn't either. He owned a lovely little freehold farm at Coate, but it was too

[14] Fanny (Ridger) Jefferies died in 1858, when Florence was 2.
[15] John Luckett Jefferies 1824 – 1856. Buried at Christ Church
[16] Fanny Jefferies married William Cox of Snodshill Farm, Coate.
[17] Eliza Jefferies married George Sewell of Swindon. He was Uncle of William Sewell who married Emily Hall
[18] James Luckett was Richard Jefferies' father.

small for money-making, and he was always too heavily handicapped – no ready money, and the haunting certainty that he would not be able to hold it. He married so very unsuitable a wife – a Londoner – and had not even a pony-trap to drive her to market in! She did her best I am sure, for she used to make butter and cheese, and that was work in those days, but she never had any money to spend as she liked, and the heart was taken out of her by the lack. She was very kind to us children, gave of what she had lavishly. She was very good-looking, with dark eyes and a bright complexion.

Some of my happiest recollections are of Coate, and I am passionately attached to the place. Butter and cheese-making were carried on at most of the farms in those days, all done by hand; the only machines, the churn and the cheese-press. Many a time have I helped churn; the handle was of steel uncovered, cold and shiny, and revolved in one's palm – polishing that! Sometimes the butter would not 'come' for hours, and we used to chant a slow sort of dirge,to encourage it, I suppose,

Milk the milk in a wooden pail,
Come, butter, come,
Take care the cow don't dip in her tail
Come, butter, come.

The cheeses were mostly thin Gloucester, and there is nothing like them now – they were made of skimmed milk, and were not very rich. There was always a spacious well-aired room, called the cheese-room, to store them in on long open shelves, and they had to be turned every second day. I believe I could make cheese today, as it was made then, one slow process after another. Aunt Cox used to raise the press and trim the fresh curd to shape, giving us always this 'curd' as a treat. I loathed it, but thought it impolite to say so, but Fan and the others enjoyed it. I remember once hiding it in my hankie, then at dinner, pulled out my hankie and out came the curd all over the floor. Fortunately, the old spaniel – Dash, was near and eat it up quickly, and it was not noticed.

All the farmers kept pigs in old filthy sties, and fed them on the strangest food. The dairy waste all went into a big pit, and to this was added all scraps from the house; the mixture was appalling, almost black, and it was used to mix the meal, or fill the troughs for drink. There was a long-handled dipper and just a loose cover to the hole, which was dangerous and would be thought deadly nowadays, but the pigs seemed to do well enough, and to thrive on dirt. The old sows were most appreciative if you came with a rough stick and scratched their backs, yet note the lovely clean pigs of today to know what they can look like, if properly cared for.

Gradually, all the farms we visited gave up dairy work, and sent their milk to Centres. This relieved the hard work of the farm, but left such a lot of rooms and sheds and outbuildings empty and useless; no dairy, no pigs.

[After relating an adventure in a horse-and-trap, Florence goes on]

The Plough Hill was the scene of this comedy, and the old inn half way up it, then bore a sign with the following verse on it:–

In hopes we live

In hopes we die
In hopes we are bred.
And I am here
To sell good beer
In hopes to get my bread.

When we made trips by 'brake' to Marlbro' Forest we always looked out for this old sign.

The country folk wore clogs or pattens when the fields were deep in mire. Clogs are still used in places, heavy wooden jointed shoes, but pattens were oval iron rings, quite two inches off the ground that had no 'give' in them, cut out nice shapes in the mud, and wanted an apprenticeship to use. I can hear the ring of them now on the stone-flagged dairy or yard. All kitchens were stone-paved in those days. Longford [Villa] was the first house of ours that had a wooden kitchen floor.

There was a lovely old iron fireback representing the flight into Egypt. I wonder where it went. There were settles either side of the fire and you could roast yourself there, look up the great, wide chimney, and see a very bright star looking down. There was a great iron thing (I forget the right name for it[19]) fixed over the fire; you could hang a pot on it, and regulate its distance from the flame and you heated wine or milk in a pointed pot that was pushed right into the hot logs (that had a special name too[20]) and elderberry wine hotted in it on a cold night before walking back to Swindon was a dream.

There were at least 10 fields to go through, stiles to scramble over and just planks over brooks, and yet we used to come this way any time of the night, and get landed just below the church, but still a good walk to home. The other was that long walk along what was through seven fields to the road just outside Coate Farm, and there was that long walk along what was then quite a country road – yet this never prevented our going to Snodshill whenever possible – it was a most hospitable house, and there were plenty of boys about only too glad to make up a party.

Weather. Then, in the days of our youth what different weather we had. The winters were so cold, fresh and consequently frozen ponds lasting with good skating for weeks. Often the water in one's ewer was frozen, and if neglected burst the jug. The summers as correspondingly hot, week after week of blazing sunshine, often at night the most terrific thunderstorms, when everyone lay in fear the house should be 'struck.'

We had no ices, no aerated waters, or cooling drinks of any kind except those made at home of lemon and bicarbonate. The soda-water bottles were oval-bottomed, and could not stand up and were sold only and solely for diluting spirits – for the men! The consequence was children would drink of any water, anywhere and fever was common. We all went through this trouble in turn, and it was not considered out of the way. Fan had it very badly and her hair was cut off close; a terrible loss in those days. Measles was common and considered as inevitable as teething, children were quite expected to have it, and if it attacked one child the rest took it as a matter of

[19] Called a crane
[20] Called a muller – hence mulled wine

course. There were no hospitals save in the large towns; the only house approaching this being the “Pest House” that was ready for the emergency: cases of tramps with small pox, that most dreaded of diseases. I think the road where this house stood is now called “The Mall,” with fine modern villas in it.

Consumption was very common, and not fought on the modern lines; windows were hermetically sealed, wraps and scarves heaped on the poor victim, and often a respirator worn.

Yet Fan and I at the respective ages of 87 and 81 – in this year of Grace 1937, say “Yet I think the race was hardier in those days.”

Think of it, you young people, eighty years or so ago there were no motors, no cinemas, no wireless, no trams, no buses, no lavatories, no hot water laid on, no phones, few wires, which came later, only one paper a week, no steam laundries, just washerwomen, no bathing pools or baths,

But we had the Penny Post! •

Notes by Fanny Catherine Hall

Coate Farm not purchased by Swindon Corporation as a memorial of Richard, but as a home for the custodian of the Reservoir, now called Coate Water.

The plaque on the wall was placed there in .=.....

The BRUNSDENS lived opposite nearby the Jefferies' Farm, and in my earliest recollections, 2 brothers were the farmers – one is said to have aspired to the hand of Miss Mary Jefferies of Swindon – daughter of the owner of Coate Farm, Mr John Jefferies.[21]

Until the thatch was replaced by slate roofing, it was picturesque – I have a dim recollection of going over one summer afternoon with an Aunt, and finding the living–room still in the workmen's hands – and with a lovely big window-place,[22] where afterwards I spent many happy hours over the *Arabian Nights*. That must have been in 1853 or 4, as I can visualise the second son, Harry, as a wee baby! The musk was a delight! Now, not a trace of the former, sweet-smelling flower.

I never heard of Daddy Hanks. The only schools that I remember were kept by Mr. Nurse, assisted by a daughter; the former not living in Swindon; with (Mr. Steger) a clergyman's son, that was ? to which school I always thought Richard went. Mr. Steger was a weird-looking man, with so poor a flair for figures, that once, when he had applied for a post as clerk in the G.W.R. offices, my father was so astonished at the poor result of an examination, that he said to him, "Why Jimmy, how on earth did you teach boys?" To which the slow-wit replied, "Oh, we just took them in and did our best for them."

Richard was domineering, never a favourite with his cousins of either sex. Yet in maturer years, he made love to a cousin (your mother[23]) for a time.

James's Pen was in a field across the road, and was not much used when I was young – I recollect it well.

Sunday evening services. These were not held in the parlour of Coate Farm, but in the Skillen,[24] which was always made very fit for the Sunday evening services. Uncle James assisted materially too in the erection of the little Mission Church on the high Road. If I remember rightly, it was the Vicar of Liddington who usually officiated, the Rev. Henry Munn.

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[21] John Jefferies was Richard's grandfather. His daughter Mary, the fourth child, never married. She died in 1862, aged 47, and is buried at Christ Church.

[22] This is the bay window in the room on the right as you enter the front door.

[23] Emily b. February 1852. Later married William Sewell.

[24] The 'skillen' or 'Skilling' was a portion of a paved or pitched courtyard that was roofed in. It night run the whole length, of one side of the house, and be enclosed by a brick wall, with one or two gates opening from it. (See 'An English Homestead,' in *The Toilers of the Field.*)

The ‘other boy’ to adventure with him on his famous walk through Europe to Moscow, was his own Cousin, James Cox.

Job Lawrence, the Curator of the Reservoir, and who later became the owner of Coate Farm, was a pleasant, rubicund man, and well–liked.

As to the expression that ‘that man is an out-and-out atheist,’ it should be treated with the contempt it deserves.[25]

Wm. Brown was a tall, gaunt man, with a slight squint. Very honest and straightforward, he lived at ‘Bown’s Cottage,’ now demolished – on the side of a hill on Coate Road. He was glad, no doubt, to add to his meagre wage, by employing his leisure hours with the neighbouring farmers. I remember him bringing up to Swindon on one occasion, a large washing-basket of apples – from Uncle’s orchard.

Abner Webb was the head man, or perhaps the only one in my young days at Coate Farm. A typical Wiltshire labourer of his time.

The Freemans of Walcot came occasionally to Snodshill.

[25] A reference to ideas expressed in *The Story of my Heart*, which some held to be subversive of the Christian faith.