

Elizabeth lived on the side of a valley. One winter, there was a very big flood in the valley, and a lot of houses down below Elizabeth's were washed away, but Elizabeth's house was high enough to escape the flood, so when the water had disappeared and the other houses were standing there with no roofs and no walls and all covered with mud, her house was still quite all right.

Her house was quite small, her husband was dead, and she had six children, but Elizabeth took in one of the families which had lost everything in the flood and shared her home with them until it was possible for them to build their house again.

Elizabeth's friend was very puzzled when she saw Elizabeth do this. She could not understand why Elizabeth wanted to give herself so much more work and trouble when she already had so many children to support.

'Well,' Elizabeth explained to her friend, 'at the end of the First World war, a woman in the town in which I then lived in Germany found herself very poor, because her husband had been killed in the war and she had a lot of children, as I have now.'

'The day before Christmas, this woman said to her children, "We won't be able to have much for Christmas this year, so I'm going to get only one present for all of us. Now I'll go and get it," She came back with a little girl who was even poorer than they were, and who had no mother as well as no father. "Here's our present," she said to the children.'

'The children were very excited and happy to get such a present. They welcomed the little girl, and she grew up as their sister. I was that Christmas present.'