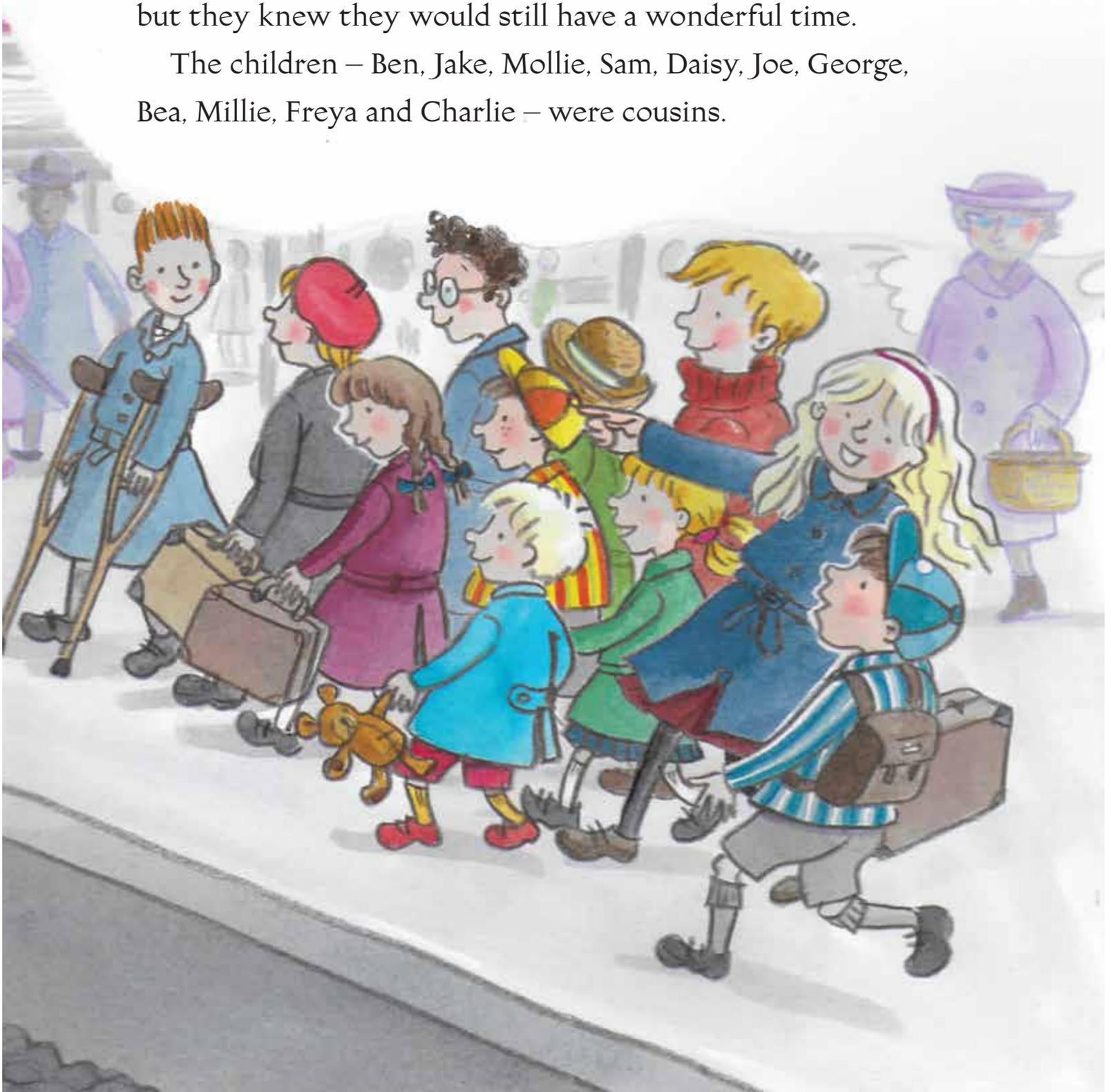


The children were very excited. Tomorrow they would be going by train to visit their grandparents in the country, where there were always special, magical things to look forward to.

When they awoke next morning, it was pouring with rain but they knew they would still have a wonderful time.

The children – Ben, Jake, Mollie, Sam, Daisy, Joe, George, Bea, Millie, Freya and Charlie – were cousins.



After breakfast they arrived at the station and after saying goodbye to their parents, clambered on board the train and settled in their seats.

Each grandchild carried with them a small case in one hand, packed with their clothes and a special toy, and in the other enough sandwiches and drink to last five exciting hours on the train. George, of course, ate his straight away.

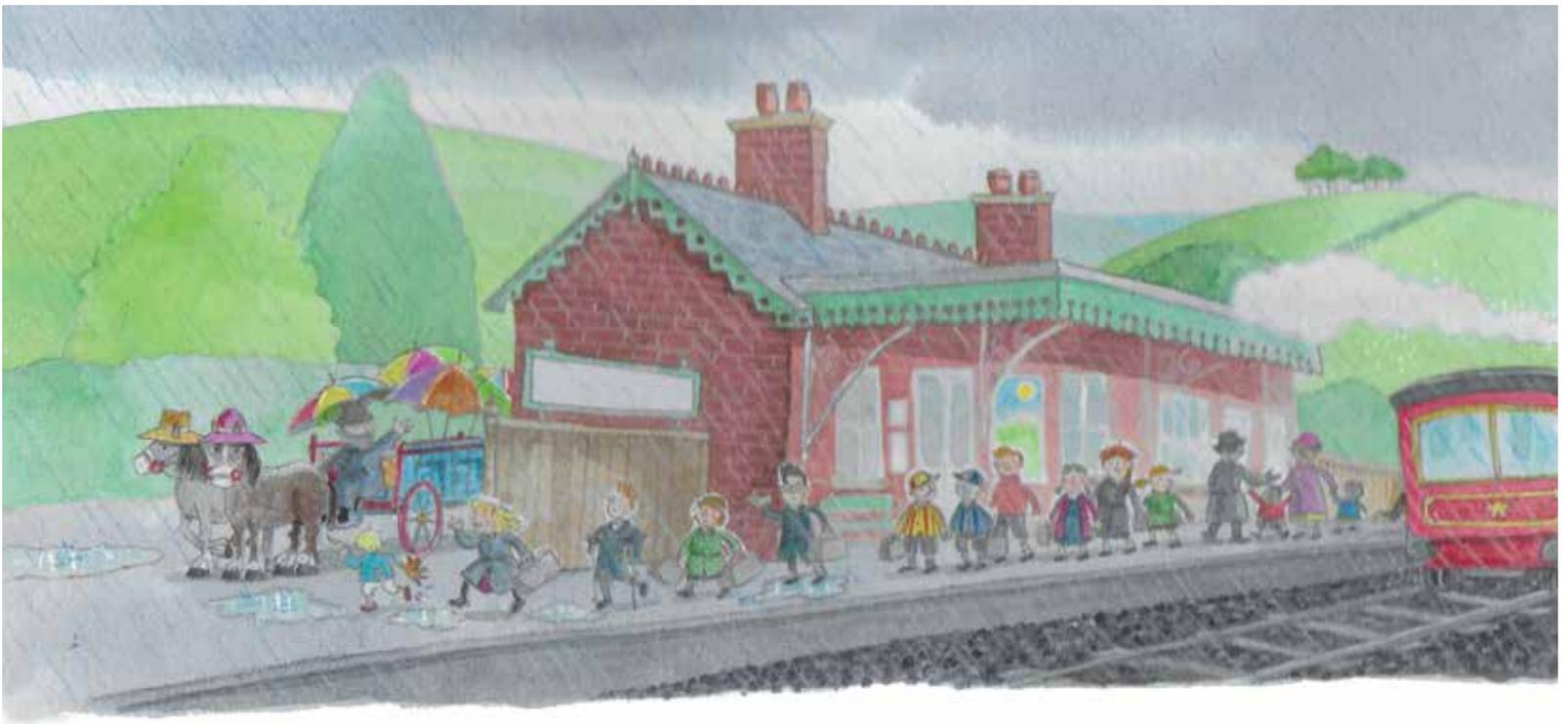


The train would stop at six stations before arriving in the country.

After the fifth there was always a competition to see who spied the sea first. This year it was more difficult because the rain had splashed big drops of water on the window.

Mollie was the first to shout, 'I can see the sea!' and Charlie cried, because he was not tall enough to see properly.



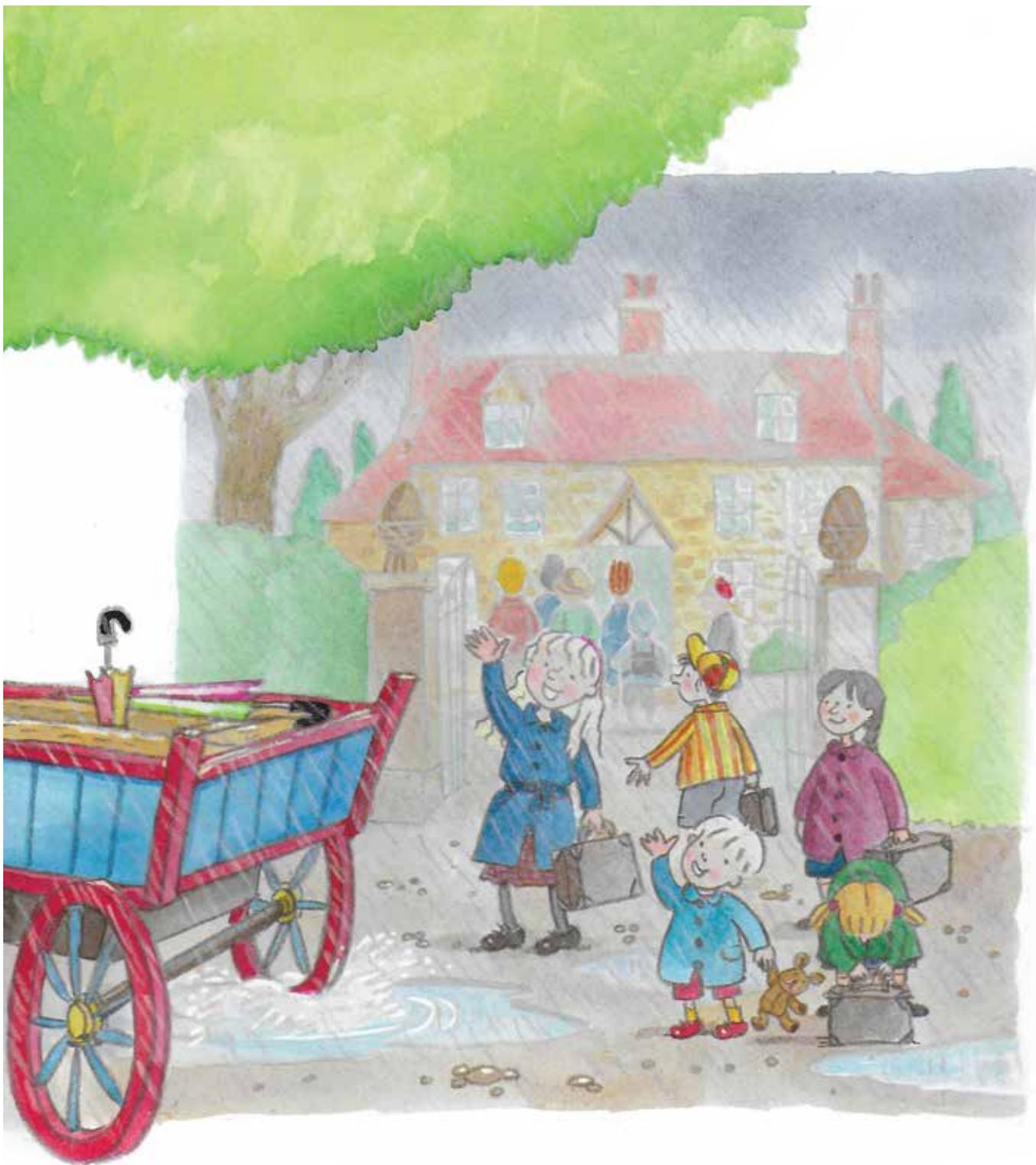


At last they arrived, and as they stepped off the train, it was raining even more.

They rushed down the platform to see who would reach their grandparents first, but they were nowhere to be seen.

Instead there was Old Joe, the next door farmer, who had come to meet them on his wagon pulled by his faithful horses, Harry and Mabel. There were hay bales to sit on and four large umbrellas to shelter them from the rain.





Harry and Mabel clip-clopped away at a gentle pace and before long, they arrived at their grandparents' house. It was a long house with three large chimneys and had a gently flowing river running beside it.

The children jumped from the wagon, waved goodbye to Old Joe and raced through the big, white gates to the front porch.