

## FRIENDLESS BOB.

*(From Children's Friend.)*CHAPTER II. *(Continued.)*

Next morning Bob woke early, and feeling very hungry—for tarts, however fascinating, are not of a supporting nature—he ventured to approach the cottage, and to his relief found it empty. It was not uncommon for the old woman to go off on the tramp, sometimes for days together, without any warning, and the ill-used boy was always glad when this was the case; utter loneliness was better than constant abuse. And now he was not utterly alone; there was another to think of as well as himself; and Bob got Jerry some breakfast of chaff and bran before he made his own of scraps, which he found in the cupboard. Then he began his day's work.

Several weeks passed, and July was close at hand, with its hot days, lovely nights, and luxuriant verdure. Evident symptoms were apparent in the little seaside village that "the season" was about to commence. Houses put on their most inviting aspect; some with fresh coatings of paint, all with clean windows and snowy curtains, and the little garden in front gay with flowers; the words, "Lodgings to let," being conspicuous in all directions.

On one of these Midsummer days it came to pass that our hero Bob was seized with an idea. The bright summer weeks had passed but slowly to him; his work was hard and monotonous as usual; Mrs. Brown had come back, at first stupid with drink, and then as cross as ever. The boy, however, was not so unhappy as of old; he never could be again—he had entered a new life, the life of unselfishness and love. Poor Bob, he was but at the entrance: ill-temper and obstinacy, thoughts of revenge and the old habit of untruthfulness still hold sway in his heart, but sometimes they were turned out or forgotten, and new happy feelings took their place—affection toward Jerry, who daily returned it with more devotion, watching for his little master's step, and working far better without the discarded stick; hopes for some change in his present life; longings to see his good friend the strange gentleman again, and thoughts of how he had said if he were kind to Jerry, God would be his friend. "And He knows all about granny, and me, and everything," said the boy to himself.

Since Bob had taken to grooming Jerry with an old curry-comb every morning, and saving up the odd halfpence with which he used

to buy sweets, toward occasional treats of chopped hay, or a stale loaf, or carrots and cabbages for the donkey, it was wonderful what an improvement had taken place in his appearance. No animal pays more for kindness and attention than a donkey, and ragged, dirty, little half-starved, sulky, miserable Jerry became a lively, handsome animal.

It was while his master was one day admiring him that he suddenly clapped his hand on to the donkey's back, and exclaimed—

"I say, old fellow, you are a regular beauty, and I don't see

ing, when Bob meant to broach his new suggestion.

Circumstances so far favored him. Granny was in one of her mildest moods, and though she would not have thought it at all right to give in at once to any foolish boy's scheme (her decided conviction being that all boys were silly when nothing worse) without putting sundry obstacles in the way, yet she did not say "No," nor did she throw anything at Bob's head and tell him to hold his tongue. So the boy felt encouraged and, warming to his subject, he expatiated on the advantages of the plan, and on Jerry's

to? Who paid for him, eh, boy? But don't look so glum," she continued, for Bob was speechless with dismay, "I won't sell him till after this grand new scheme of yours has come off. Not that I believe in it, mind you; you'll get larking with the other idle boys, and lose your earnings, and get into no end of mischief. But look here, Bob, if you don't bring your poor granny your earnings to pay her for bringing you up like her own child, I'll put a stop to it all. So now you know."

Thus Bob got the consent he wanted; but with it a most unwelcome reminder of a fact he had never thought of. He had been so accustomed to think of Jerry as his donkey, and had so often heard him spoken of as his, that it had never entered into his head that he belonged to Mrs. Brown. Such, however, was undoubtedly the unpleasant truth, and it spoiled all the boy's pleasure that night.

"You shan't be sold, dear old Jerry—I'll run away with you sooner!" he declared, as he gave the donkey his supper that night.

Old Mrs. Brown congratulated herself, for she thought she could make rather a good thing out of Bob's fears.

And now behold, after a week had passed, a pretty sight upon the sometimes lonely beach at the quiet seaside village. It is not lonely now or quiet. There are children in all directions, digging in the sand, paddling in the little rippling waves, bathing in the blue sea, being rowed in pleasure-boats, being driven in donkey-chaises or riding on donkeys—all shrieking with pleasure and excitement; while curly-coated dogs bark and dash into the sea after bits of stick, and papas, mammas, governesses, and nursemaids in vain try to maintain any kind of order among the young ones. It is as much as they can do to keep them out of the sea, where they seem bent on self-destruction!

And who is this standing among a group of donkey-boys, with smiling look and clean hands and face, and by his side a donkey resplendent in new harness, side-saddle, and white cloth, and on one side of its head a marigold stuck in his bridle, which gives him a jaunty air, which his owner thinks must strike all eyes? Bob and Jerry had been up since day-break, and the brushing and combing and smoothing down that Jerry had received must have convinced him that something out of common was going to happen, even if he had not understood Bob's frequent communica-



"WHAT A DEAR LITTLE DONKEY! DO LOOK, PAPA."

why you and I shouldn't do a little business this season on the beach! I'll turn donkey-boy, and you'll see if folks don't pick you out."

Bob was so delighted with this idea that he turned head over heels several times before he was brought up standing with a more sober face, as he thought there would be side-saddle and harness to buy. He concluded, however, that it might be managed, and all the rest of that day was spent in plans and schemes and fervent hopes that his grandmother would be in a decent temper that even-

attractive appearance.

"Yes, my lad," said the old woman presently, with a gunning look, "I've seen as how you've been a-cockering up that donkey, and treating him for all the world like a gentleman's race-horse. What's your little game—to sell him, eh? I don't say it would be a bad look-out, and get another cheap."

Sell Jerry! Bob's heart sank like lead. "No, no, granny," he cried, when he could speak—"I couldn't sell him!"

"You couldn't sell him! And whom do you suppose he belongs