

## WILFRED'S HOLIDAY LESSON.

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(Continued.)

What awful hours those were spent on the cliff! In his hour of danger Wilfred thought of God, knew that his life was in His hands, and that no one else could save it. And Launcelot was in God's hands too! God was there watching over them both, boy and pony alike—God had made both. It all flashed across the boy's mind then. And how had he treated one of His creatures? What could God be thinking of him now? He knew that He was loving him, as He loves every child for whom the dear Saviour has died; but was He not angry with him too?

How every unkind word that he had said to his sister, every unfilial act toward the mother who loved him so dearly, now rose up before his mind and reproached him! How the very whip he still held, mechanically, in his hand upbraided him; had he not used it even to-day to pain his good friend, for no reason but the pleasure that inflicting torture afforded?

He could have beaten himself now at the remembrance of his conduct toward Launcelot and other dumb creatures! How could he have ill-treated any animal, with such a faithful, forgiving nature? Life's aspect was so different to this wild, reckless boy now, viewed, as it were, from the very brink of the grave. How he loved his school, his playfellows, his home, the very flowers that grew in his mother's garden, the shells he had found on the beach during these last holidays—how he loved everything now when it seemed going from him, or rather he going from it! But how he loved Launcelot more than all; and there, standing on the cliff, surrounded by the water's roar, Wilfred vowed that if God would spare his life, he would never ill-use a dumb animal again!

Three weary hours passed, and hope dawned at last for Wilfred. The tide had turned; the waters were receding. Oh, joy! he soon slid from his pony's back and stood close by him, as close as he could get, with his arms flung round his neck.

"You good fellow!" he said, as he threw his whip far into the sea, "I will never use that again. Poor Launcelot! How tired and cramped you must be, but how I love you now!"

The pony put his soft head near to Wilfred's shoulder, in token that he loved him too.

"If I had only some corn for you, Launcelot," he went on, "I should be so glad, for you must be very hungry." Wilfred knew from his own hunger what his pony must be feeling. They had now been out six hours. What

could his mother be thinking? He knew that he ought not to have come this long way without permission, and she would be fearfully anxious. Katie might think of Ned, and go and ask him where her brother had gone; but if they found this out, could they now do anything for him? It was the anxiety that he knew his mother would be enduring that added to Wilfred's grief, and struck most horror into his heart at this moment.

He and his pony were out of present danger. The waters were certainly going back, but they could not start yet. At last Wilfred saw that they could venture. It was with difficulty that he and Launcelot descended the steep cliff, and when they at length stood upon the beach, the pony was quite lame, and could hardly move.

All the boy's thought seemed now to be for his pony. "How tired and hungry you must be, Launcelot!" he said feelingly, as he stroked affectionately the pretty silky mane now wet and cold.

It appeared a long while before they came to the path, and even then Launcelot walked very slowly. Wilfred did not mount him again.

There was great confusion in the house when they arrived: everybody was wondering where Wilfred and Launcelot could be. Katie and her mother had gone long ago to question Ned, but he was out for the day, and had but just returned, when he hastened round to tell Mrs. Hewett what he knew.

Whilst he was speaking, the pony's steps were heard in the distance. How the fond mother kissed her son! how Katie danced for joy when Wilfred and Launcelot came home! "I thought you had both gone away," she said. "I thought I had lost both my brothers!"

Wilfred was too tired, too cold, and too much exhausted to speak. He could but ask for Launcelot to have a feed and to be made warm, in his stable, at once, and then he was led up to bed.

Wilfred was very ill after this. For days and nights he lay delirious. "We shall drown," he exclaimed; "Launcelot, I know, I am sure we shall drown! Oh that horrid whip! why did I ever use it? Why am I so cruel? Oh! won't the water ever go back?" His mother could not understand his ravings, but she felt sure that he and the pony had passed through some great danger together. Wilfred could tell her nothing; he did not even recognize her. The only name he called, during those days of fever, was "Launcelot."

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Wilfred was convalescent, and in his first sensible hour he told his mother all that had, that dreadful day, befallen himself and the pony.

"Did you ever know such a good fellow, mother?" asked the boy, eagerly, raising himself up in bed, after narrating their adventures.

"He is very good," said Mrs. Hewett; "but I have always told you, Wilfred, that dumb animals are most faithful friends."

"Launcelot was clever as well as good, mother, for he seemed to know everything he was doing."

"No doubt he did. Both horses and dogs have wonderful instincts."

"How unkind they must think us! Oh, mother, I never really thought before that animals had much feeling."

"They have very tender feeling, and are susceptible to all kinds of pain and pleasure. And whilst they do man faithful service, they naturally look for kindness from him in return."

"And I have so often been unkind to Launcelot, mother. Do you know I have sometimes beaten him so hard that I wonder he didn't kick me; and very often it was only to show how well I could master him?"

"You were thoughtless, my boy, and I am afraid a great many faithful animals suffer sadly through the thoughtlessness of girls and boys; but this should not be. God has a thought for dumb animals. The Bible tells us that 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry,' and we have no right to ill-use one of God's creatures that He has lent us for our use and comfort."

"I am so sorry, mother, that I was ever unkind to Launcelot," Wilfred repeated again; "but I will not be so any more, nor to any other animal; and I will ask Ned not to be cruel either. It never seemed so bad as it does now. Do you know, mother, if Launcelot had not saved my life I should not be here now to kiss you? Don't you love him?"

"Indeed, I do, my boy," said the affectionate mother, as she clasped her only son in her arms; "But I love still more the merciful God who permitted my child to be saved. It has been a lesson to you, Wilfred; and if your adventures, the other day, have really taught you the duty of kindness to dumb animals, I shall not be sorry for what you have suffered."

"I am sure they have taught me this, mother; but I do so long to see Launcelot again, to thank him once more for what he did, and to ask him again to forgive me."

And the lesson that Wilfred had learnt that awful day, when he stood between life and death, upon the edge of the cliff, and was only just out of reach of the rising waters, he never forgot. He was really manly now, much more so than before. None of his companions ever called him "coward," and he enjoyed fun and sport

with the rest of them; but he never again made creatures of sense and feeling the victims of his sport. To cause pain now afforded him no pleasure, and he tried to teach Ned and his other comrades the lesson that he himself had learnt.

The holidays were prolonged in consequence of Wilfred's illness, for when he rose from his sick-bed he was very weak, and had to stay at home to be nursed.

Many were the pleasant rides he took on his faithful pony during these days of convalescence, and Katie had not to offer bribes that Launcelot should have kindness and consideration shown to him. He was one of Wilfred's best and dearest of friends, and when the holidays came round again, these two spent all the time together that Wilfred could spare from his other pets; for he and Katie now had many pets in common, to whom they were very good and kind.

Dogs and cats no longer ran from Wilfred as from an enemy, and Launcelot seemed to miss his young master very much when the holidays were over.

Wilfred had learnt his lesson. May every other boy and every girl learn, also, that kindness to animals, who are good, kind, and dutiful to us, is a strict duty, a pleasure, an obligation—unkindness a most grievous sin in the sight of God and man.—*Children's Friend.*

## NOTHING MENIAL.

The moment the true conception of work goes down in any society, the life and dignity of that society are imperilled. We draw lines now between one kind of service and another, and there used to be people who advertised that they would undertake any situation that was not—menial. What becomes of those people? History is silent about them. They never rise to anything, they never take hold of circumstance in the right place, and shape them into subservience. They are always cursed with their own stuffed respectability; they have to carry that huge stuffed sawdust god about with them, and to say, "Please make room for this, and set it down in a suitable place." How are you going to tackle life? By declining to carry parcels? I would carry fifty parcels, if I could, rather than beg. "Shall we send this for you, sir?" Certainly not; if I cannot put it in my pocket, I can carry it in my hand. The fear of the soiled fingers has fallen upon some of us.—*Dr. Joseph Parker.*

"A GOOD NAME is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."—Proverbs xxii. 1.

"THE HAND of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute."—Proverbs xii. 24.