

OLD BEN.

IT'S going to be cold to-night," said Jack, the burly hired man, coming from the barn, and putting out his great brown hands towards the fire.

Roy looked up from his book and nodded.

"I pity the man who will have to go far in the wind," said Jack.

"And the horses too, eh, Jack?"

"Oh, horses can stand it. They're used to being out, and their skin is thick," was the answer. "There's Old Ben; he'll get under the tree and get warm."

"I hope you haven't left Ben out," exclaimed Roy. "If you have you have done wrong, for Ben is a faithful horse, and never shirks a duty. Animals have feelings as well as human beings, and they serve us well when we are kind to them."

"Well, I guess it won't hurt Ben to leave him out to-night. It'll toughen the old fellow, and, besides, it was too cold for me to go to him in the teeth of the wind and fetch him in. It's only one night, Roy," seeing Roy shut the book.

"But it's Old Ben, the best hand on the farm," said the boy, quickly. "We should be kind to dumb animals. I would never have thought of leaving the old fellow in the meadow such a night as this. It is cruel."

Jack made no reply, but looked half-scowlingly at the boy, and, having warmed himself at the fire, went up to the attic to bed.

Roy arose and walked to the window. Already Jack's predictions were being fulfilled. A cold wind was rattling the windows of the farmhouse, and indications of a bitterly cold night were abundant. The boy heard the blast with a shudder.

By and by he slipped from the house and went to the barn; taking a halter from above Old Ben's stall, he went down the lane that led to the meadow. He could hardly see his way, the night was so dark, and the wind seemed to blow through his bones.

"Ben's nothing but a brute to Jack," said Roy. "The man can't appreciate good service until it has been hammered into him. What does he care for a freezing horse as long as he is tucked up in a warm bed?"

Roy reached the bars and called Old Ben. In a little while he was answered by a joyful whinny, and the old horse came up. Roy haltered him and rode him back to his stall.

"I'll never go back on you, old fellow," said the boy, patting Old Ben's strong neck, and when he had seen him safe in the barn, with a good feed before him, he went back to his book.

Though old, Ben was the swiftest horse on the farm. He could out-distance all the others,

and when speed was necessary he was always the chosen one.

The wind rose higher and higher, and Jack, frightened by the storm, sprang from the bed and fell headlong down the stairs, at the bottom of which he lay badly hurt, and calling for a doctor. Roy's mother examined him and shook her head; the case was serious.

"You can't get Ben up in time to ride for the doctor," groaned Jack.

"He's closer than the meadow," answered Roy, as he hurried off, and in a trice he was riding the faithful old horse over the country road at the top of his speed.

The doctor came back with Roy, and Jack was not only made comfortable, but his life was saved.

"Roy didn't lose time," said the surgeon to his patient. "If Old Ben had been in the meadow instead of in his stall, you would surely have bled to death."

The man turned pale, and looked at the boy.

"How did Old Ben get to his stall?" he asked.

"I brought him in from the field after you had gone to bed. I tell you it pays to be kind to animals. Don't you think it does, Jack?"

Big Jack, the farm-hand, held out his hand and took Roy's in his horny palm. "I guess I needed a lesson of this sort," said he. "Hereafter, if there is to be any freezing in the meadow, it shan't be Old Ben."

It pays to be kind to dumb animals. They respect the soft hand and kindly voice, and stand ready, in their humble way, to repay a kindness a thousandfold. Don't forget the dumb inhabitants of God's beautiful earth.—*Selected.*

THE story is told of the late Bishop Selwyn, that once, in connection with one of the New Zealand wars, 10,000 British troops were landed on the northern island. There was only one chaplain to the whole number, and he a Roman Catholic. The bishop immediately constituted himself an additional chaplain, and began services and Bible classes with the men; and they all became so enthusiastic about him that they used to say it was a shame he was not a general!

And once again, in a time of public disturbance, a fanatical native prophet persuaded the people of a certain village not to receive the bishop into their houses, but to offer him the rîgstye for his night's shelter. The churlish offer was made. The bishop simply accepted it, went to work, turned out the pigs, cleaned out the stye, cut some fresh fern and made himself a bed in good style. The astonished natives said: "You cannot *whaka-tutua* that man," meaning, "You cannot degrade him from the character of a gentleman."—*Selected.*