EXT.

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school children.

Pincher lived beautifully up to his name whenever he got a chance, by pinching the tails of their pet cats as they raced up trees to escape him, and by snarling and barking at their own heels, with all sorts of deep-throaty growls and dark threatenings to do dreadful things.

The children had got into the way of retaliating upon Captain Ben, whenever they got a chance, by sending him anonymous parcels containing all sorts of old rubbish; while occasionally some of the most daring would risk the chance of being caught by Pincher, and steal in and help themselves to apples, or even chase his pigs and geese.

They did not mean to be wicked, but considered it a sort of pay-back for all his unkindness and gruffness to them. "He started it," they always stoutly maintained when questioned about the

But now they had the best of him; at least they thought they had, as the news had gone around the village that Pincher was dead. In fact, Captain Ben had told Joe Harper so himself, saying in his gruffest manner as the boy passed by to school, "Pincher is dead; he'll not bother you no moah," with such a fierce look, "just for all the world as though we had killed him," said Joe, when re. peating the old man's speech to his

"They had not killed him; oh, my, no ! although they had threatened to do so often enough. He had been run over by an auto, late in the autumn, and never had recovered from it."

So they had begged Mabel to make them a valentine in the form of a little booklet, each leaf having on it a ludicrous and ugly sketch of Pincher and his master, from the time when the dog had been a puppy, ending with the last page, the burial scene, where Captain Ben was heartily shedding tears over the grave. On the grave-stone they had placed the

"Here lies the tawny, yellow brute, The meaking cur, the fierce galoot, A fitting mate for his master gray, Whom we sincerely hate more and more each day."

following epitaph:

The children did not realize how much the old man loved his dog, or they would not have thought of doing anything so heartless.

Later in the day as Mabel was showing the valentines she had made all ready to send to her friends to Mildred Jones, Mildred said, "Oh, my, but aren't they just lovely! I just wish I could draw like you; but then I'd have no money to he materials with even if I could, so I might as well cry for the moon at once and be done with it," she finished with a little laugh.

"The first one I'd send a valentine to, if I had one to send, would be old Captain Ben," she said, looking out of the window across the fields to where the smoke from the little cottage could be seen making its way up into the clear, frosty air.

Forgetting her promise to the boys to keep silent about it, Mabel said, "He's going to get one."

"Is he !-oh, let me see it. I hope it's all roses, and violets, and blue ribbons, and gold lace, like the one I've been admiring in Simpson's window every day I passed," said Mildred, her eyes dancing in pleased expectancy.

Mabel turned rosy-red as she said, "Mildred Jones, are you crazy? Roses and violets and ribbons for Old Ben! I guess not. Why, he's perfectly horrid to us all the time; as horrid as"-here Mabel stopped as though searching her brain for a fitting comparison.

"As horrid as the Jones crowd," said Mildred, with a gleam of mischief in her eyes. The Harpers, Jones crowd, Kemps and Scotts, were inseparable friends now, ever since the episode of the Christmas-tree, and the remodelled slide.

"Oh, no, indeed," said Mabel hastily, "that is, I mean you are not horrid now, and never would have been, had we been inclined to be friendly with you all at first."

"Perhaps Old Ben's the same," said Mildred. "If we'd do him a kindness, now and then, perhaps he would not be so grumpy. But come, show me the valentine anyway. What is it like?"

"I can't show it to you, the boys have

declared between his master and the it; but I'll have to confess, it's not at all like the kind you would have sent him—just the opposite."

"Well, then, we must not let the boys send it," said Mildred firmly.

"Poor old Captain Ben, I've always lelt a sort of pity for him. You see, I know how it feels to be lonely, and how cross and horrid it makes one to feel and know for certain that no one loves Here Mildred's voice trembled a little, her toneliness was of such recent

date that she had not forgotten it yet. "You poor darling," said Mabel warmly, "you're not lonely now, are you?"

"No; not since you and Lillie and May, and all your other chums have taken me up and have been so kind to me; even our housekeeper seems to be finding out that we have hearts, and are human. But still all these little things I have to be thankful for only make me long to help Captain Ben more and more. should like to send him something bright and pretty, just to let him know that

Mabel looked at her friend's flushed face and tender eyes in surprise, as she said, "And to think that we ever called you heartless and mean. Why, you're a better girl than any of us. We've all been rejoicing over the thought that he was going to get a valentine that would make him more unhappy. But come, we'll hunt up the rest of the girls, and get them to help us persuade the boys to give up the idea of sending it."

. . . . In the meantime, a similar consultation was being held amongst the boys. They had shown Mabel's work of art to Len Jones, expecting him to admire it as much as they had done themselves.

Judge their surprise when he handed it quickly back to them as though the touch of it burnt his fingers, his face reddening as he said:

"Don't you thick it a bit rough on the old fellow, lads?"

"Course not. Why, we're sending it to pay him out for all his scowls and threats, and the times Pincher has chased us."

"I thought," said Len slowly, "that you lads did not believe in kicking a fellow when he was down."

"Neither we do,-but I don't see that Old Ben's down. He's lost Pincher, but he's too hard-hearted to care about anything," said Joe Harper.

"I don't know about that. was all he had in this world to love, and although he looked ug,y to us, I've no doubt the old fellow thought he was a beauty; in fact, I am sure he did, because I passed there last night after dark, going to the store, and Captain Ben was outside digging a grave for Pincher. He did not hear me, but I could hear him sobbing to himself, and saying, 'Poor old Pincher; poor old dog, you're gone, and the old man's all alone now.' It made me feel so badly that I had to run all the way to the store to keep the sound of that lonely old voice out of my ears."

"You see, lads, I know what it feels like to be down and out, and I would not send a valentine like that to Old Ben for a pocketful of gold."

The boys looked at each other a little shamefacedly. This, from a so lately despised Jones.

"Say, fellows," said Johnnie Kemp, "let's not send it, even if we can't be friends with the old chap, let's not give him anything more to be mad at us

"John's about right," said Bob Scott, "we've done some mean things, too; things we need not have done. Let's make a ship-shape resolution, as Captain Ben would say. For instance, Jones here, being the starter of the thing, will write it out, and we'll all sign it; something life this," scribbling with a

"We, the undersigned, do hereby solemnly promise to abstain from plaging Capt. Benjamin Leamont, in all such ways as sending him ugly valentines, stealing his Duchess apples (which, by the way, only makes us want more and more all the time), chasin his swine, and old tuff-neck, his pet gander."

Signed this day, February 10th, 1914. 1914.

Paul Jones, Len Jones. Joe Harper, Bob Scott, John Harper, John Kemp, Alan Harper, Dick Kemp. Carl Jones. Grant Scott,

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