ime to think ad had time, would have was no time. bundles out

May, 1910.

ld oak chest.
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co-heiresses thorpe Hall, yay that led to the hall. the doorway, p and threw

the position ot naturally imself round put his eye



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indeed exre just sixan alluring em. Their silken curls, nd red lips, like very his moment quilted-silk heir little into pink essing-gowns ailed on the ewiness and of children ough at the g disturbed. they can be, they stood y lit by the er her head. d Iris, in a now is that n the house

the square ich was the passed the making up knocked up wn to look. "look here!

themselves

urn. They

e wretches."

The gold plate, and mamma's ruby necklace, and Sir Humphrey's loving-

cup. What is the meaning of it?"

She swept the candle-light down on the floor at her feet, letting it fall on the bundles and the loose valuables. Her more timid sister stood trembling beside her. Suddenly, with a little cry, Iris sprang on to the chest, dragging her sister with her.

"There's someone in the chest," she said. "Now, stay down there, wheever you are! You've got to stay till

Morning."

Alas! for Bill, his curiosity had been too much for him, and his bright eye advanced to the hole in the chest had revealed his presence to Miss Iris.

Now, anyone might have expected the young ladies to scream and swoon. But Vivashes had not been herioc in the history of their country, giving great soldier-men and sailor-men to its service, without transmitting something of their qualities to the two little girls who were the only hopes of the race at this moment.

Dahlia shuddered, but kept her seat on the chest. As for Iris, she gazed

was going to do him any good he made a great mistake. The bundles had been conveniently placed for Miss Iris's purpose. They were immensely heavy in the aggregate. It took all her little strength to lift one. But when she had placed a few dozen gold plates on top of Bill Nixey he was far more securely weighed down than he had been by Miss Iris herself.

"Now, dear I must leave you for a little while," he heard her say.
"Where are you going to?" Dahlia

sked, fearfully.
"I am going to bring help. They are still up at Margrave Court. I shall not be long gone."

be long gone."
"Oh, Iris, are you going to leave me alone with this dreadful thing?"

"Will you go, and let me remain? I shall have to cross the churchyard by the short cut. And think—we are saving mother's jewels for her! She thinks so much of her rubies."

"Very well, I will stay," Dahlia answered, whimpering a little, although she tried to be brave. "You won't be long, Iris?"

"Not more than half an hour. Just



"It took all her little strength to lift one."

about her over the floor, her indignation rising as she realized the full extent of the burglar's haul. Her mother's jewel-cases had been emptied of their contents and flung aside in a heap. Many of the jewels were heirlooms and priceless. Something stirred in Iris's heart that prevented her from being afraid. She was the elder daughter; she had indeed come into the world first, with Dahlia holding on to her foot, a method of arrival very signficant to their relative positions towards

each other in after-life.

Bill was lying low in the chest, uttering not a sound. It was becoming uncommonly uncomfortable. The lid as it crashed down under the weight of the twins, had caught Bill on his side and pinioned him so that se could not use what strength he had. He did make one two desperate efforts to push up he lid, but in vain. The twins min the average weighed a ten for all the impression he made against them.

The was just about to cry out for one of them slip off the chest; but if he thought that mound outside the consecrated ground

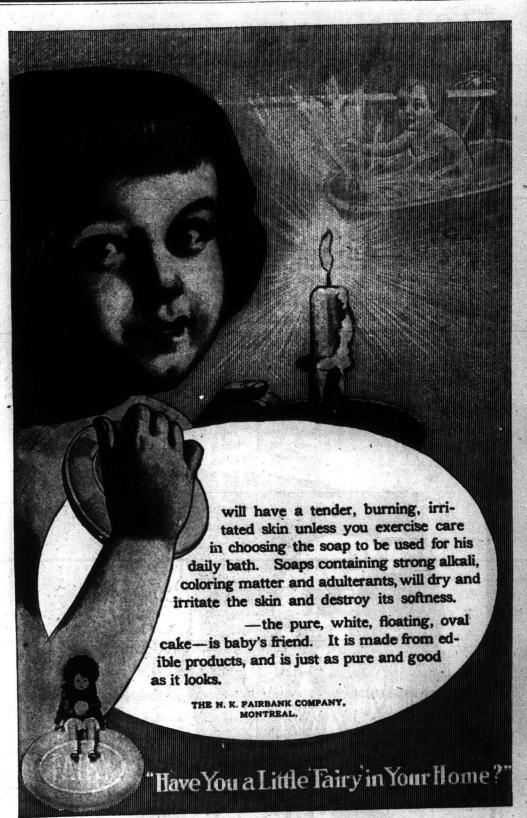
stay where you are. You will be quite safe. No one can lift the chest against the weight I have placed on it."

She pulled down a plaid from where it was flung across the shoulders of a man in armour, and, with a last adjuration to Dahlia not to stir, she was cone.

When the heavy door had clanged behind her the more timid sister sat shivering on the chest, at the farthest possible point from the eye. Was ever anyone in so horrible a position? she esked herself, and could have wept for sheer terror and self-pity. If she only knew what was attached to the eye, she thought, it wouldn't be so bad. But to be sitting there, aware only of that live eye, had something ghastly about

it to poor Dahlia's mind.

She almost wished she had choosen the church-yard. The clock chimed half-past one, and an owl hooted suddenly outside the window. By this time Iris would be crossing the churchyard. Oh, how could she do it? It was so lonely, so dark, and there was the new mound outside the consecrated ground





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