CHAPTER XXII. "You must not be hot enough in that" I remarked.

"In this climate of yours?" he re torted, raising his black delicately traced eyebrows, as he held out his slender hands to the blaze of the hall fire. "Is it ever hot here?"

"Oh, yes! About July and August we're sultry enough, though to be sure it's rather chilly during the balance of the time. Nat couldn't stand it at all at first-felt it awfully. Are you ready?"

He said "Yes," and we passed out of the hall, striking off into the Lady's Walk to get to the little gate in the park palings which was the readiest way of reaching the lane. The moon was shining brightly- and I could not help seeing the glances-very far from being friendly they werewhich he kept casting furtively at me. He had looked at me like that more than once in the course of the evening, and now I fancied that I understood why. My familiar allusion to Nat had not pleased him, and verily believed that he was quite ready to grow jealous of me in default of having anyone else. He had dropped his way of treating me as a boy too. I was taller and broader than he, any way. But his evident suspicions struck me as being se good that I laughed outright, making his dark frown draw his black brows together as he flashed me a look angry questioning

"You are amused!" he said, stiffly "I beg your pardon," I returned civilly. "I'm sure I don't know what I was laughing at. Which way would you rather go-through the village of round by the river?"

"Which will be the shortest way?" he asked, shivering in spite of the

"By the river, a good deal. You see the village is really on a curve but the river runs straight, and the station is almost in a line with it. P. the river, then?"

"I think so," he replied, shivering again, although we were walking briskly. "Is it often as cold as this?"

"Oh, dear, yes!" I said, cheerfully, he would soon be breathless trying to keep up with my ordinary one week before Christmas. You don't

"If I know what you mean, it is as

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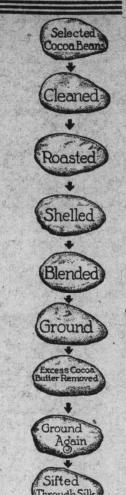
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slight laugh. "The general conditions of life here and in Jamaica are

born Daleshire man, and of course think there's no place like home. Mind you don't slip. This path is about as

This I said as we got out on to the path by the river. A light fall of snow had taken place early in the day and in the bright moonilght the little zling white was pretty enough. Even of firs looked in their snowy covering annoyed. like so many lofty sheeted phantoms My companion paused, with such a

read of such scenes, but I have seen branches sweeping heavily and noise-

eitedly. I am afraid, for I really felt hat I had a sort of proprietorship n the business. "You remind me of Nat when she saw the snow first."

Again one of those ugly glances shot at me from Raby St. George's eves in his curious sidelong fashion. and the jarring note which I had heard once or twice before was in his soft voice again as he said:

"You mean Miss Orme?" "Of course; but I have never called ner anything but 'Nat.' She asked call me 'Ned.' We Whittlesford folk how I shall manage to keep up my dignity in a year or two!" I concluded, laughing. "Awfully pretty though,

"Very beautiful," he returned, drawing a deep breath as we again

MINARD'S LINIMENT CUPPS

as I do." he returned, with a walked on. "I shall always rer

"The Burn. Odd name, isn't it? Bu that is what it is called when any on

"Oh, dear, yes-shallow enoug iere and there, but very deep in mos parts! A famous place for trout! 1 could give you some sport. But o

enough," I returned, bluntly, and aughed awkwardly conscious that the dull waters of the river glittered, had not been specially polite, to say and on the other side the plantation the least of it. But he did not seen

"You are right," he said, quietly; "I am not patient. The blood of those ook of admiration that I almost for- born in the tropics is not ice-cool.

lessly into the stream. I looked round quickly, at his tone, which had



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been a startled one. From behind the interlaced snow-covered branches man came out with such a roughly abrupt movement that the blow he struck my shoulder almost made m stagger. He was very much muffled up; and, what with the thick shawl round his neck and peaked cap drawn tightly down over his brows. could make nothing of his face but a pair of keen eyes. He looked at us both-at me especially-and then. bending his head forward on his aseful to refer to from time to time. breast, passed rapidly down the river path, and in another instant had disappeared in the darkness. "Who is it?" Raby St. George ask-

ed, staring after him.

"I'm sure I don't know," I returned, for I felt certain that I had never seen that thick-set roughly clad figure before. "A clumsy customer whoever he is!"

"He knows you," St. George said mietly

"The dickens, he does!" I exclaimed, astonished at the fone of cool conviction in which he spoke. "What makes you think that?"

"I could see it. Did you observe how he looked at you?" "He might do that without know-

ing me," I returned, a little irritated. "I think you're mistaken. Whoever ne is, he doesn't belong to Whittlesord-I know every man and woman n it." We had left the river now. and were almost in sight of the station. "Are you cold?" I asked-for e was shivering again.

"Yes, horribly! Is it far now?" "No: we shall be there in a couple of minutes;" and indeed as I spoke turn of the road brought us within view of the lights of the Station Ho-

Raby St. George shook hands at the loor, thanked me for walking with im, and took himself upsteirs to thaw, his handsome face looking uncomfortably cold and livid in color I was not sorry to be rid of him, I I was tolerably chilly myself

through walking so slowly, and put ny best foot forward now as I turn; ed back. I went round by the river choosing it as the shortest way; but although I kept my eyes about me keenly, I saw nothing of the rough shabby figure , which had brushed against my shoulder by the group of pollard willows-not, in point of fact neeting a soul at all.

(To be Continued)

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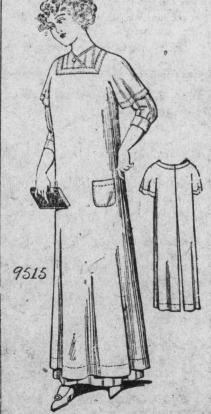


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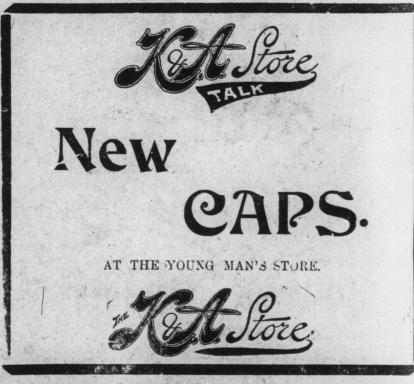
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