

from Adinbrook," she said, trying to assume her usual cheerful manner. "I had such a lot to say to you that I did not want to be hurried away before it was dusk. Why, Jip, old man, where have you been-upstairs? Are you glad to see me," she added, smiling-"gladder than that naughty mistress of yours is?"

"He could not be that," Shirley put in, in a low voice of pain; and Madge, with a quick repentance, put her arms round her.

"Forgive me," she said coaxingly. "That was a naughty sneech: but I am so glad to see you, dear Mrs.

are not equally pleased to see me." "You know that I am glad," Shirley answered, gently disengaging her- ed, looking at her keenly.

phant, while I see about tea."

said pettishly; "and I have so often stairs you had a terrific fit of coughbegged you to call me 'Madge'!"

dissatisfied face on which the fire- to the little tea-pot.

light fell. "You always please me," Madge steadily. "I had no idea I could cough against the chair. answered quickly. "But why are you so loud."

so very dignified to-day?" she added, "You coughed dreadfully. I wish with a little laugh. "I am almost you would see Dr. Lloyd. You look afraid of you-you keep me at such a anything but well. Will you let me distance."

"You fancy I do; but, dear, between the village schoolmistress and Sir then Shirley said lightly: Frederic Oliphant's daughter there is "I will think about it. Come, a wide difference."

Shirley passed into the little kit- Is Cotsford a nice place?" chen beyond, coming back presently on the fire; then she began to pre- as Stuartleigh, but quite as ancient." pare the table for tea, going about it with a quiet grace which made the mechanically. in Madge's eves.

away, or Madge would have seen

how the color rose into it at the question.

ing without her." she answered. "Without her!" echoed Madge. "But you surely do not intend to remain here alone all night?"

"Do you think that Jane would be a great protection?" Shirley asked. smiling slightly.

"No; but it would not be so lonely for you, and she was very useful. Did she displease you?"

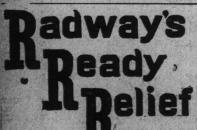
"Oh. no?" "Then why did you send her away?" Her tone was very gentle, but very firm, and there was a short silence,

sat looking into the fire, with a puz- she wondered.

eyes. Madge heard her run lightly up the is the matter? Are you faint?"

"Where is Jip?" Madge asked light- is nothing indeed. You were saving

quiet answer. "No, don't call him, I shall insist on your seeing Doctor dear, he-he is so restless, he makes Lloyd," Madge said as she went back me nervous."



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