BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

From The Century

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the room, picking up first one thing Chadwick watched her as she passed and then another. Over one shoul- and repassed from the rickety kitchder he flung a canteen and over en to the house, and when the light the other a hunting horn. Into grew clearer he thought he saw her his coat pocket he thrust an old face a look that he did not underfashioned powder flask. Mean-stand. It was indeed an inscrupuwhile his mother was busy gather- lous expression, and it would have ing together such articles as Israel puzzled a wiser man than Chadmight need. His rifle she placed wick. He chopped some wood, by the door, and then filled a large brought some water, and made himvictuals-a baked fowl, a piece of ceived no thanks from Polly. smoked beef, and a big piece of She ignored him as completely as light bread. These preparations if he had neve x st d, and all this were swiftly and silently made, set the private to minking. Now When everything seemed to be a man who reflects much usually ready for his departure Israel pre- thinks out a theory to fit every

said, by way of explanatian, "an' while the girl was preparing creaklight the fire. Maybe the boys 'Il fast. see it, an' maybe they wont. Leastways they're mighty apt to smell the smoke."

Then, without further farewell, he closed the door and stepped out into the darkness, leaving the two women sitting by the bearth. They sat there for hours, gazing into the fire and scarcely speaking to each other. The curious reticence that seems to be developed and assidu ously cultivated by the dwellers on the mountains took possession of them. The confidences and the sympathies they had in common were those of observation and experience, rather than the result of an interchange of views and opin-

Towards morning the drizzling rain ceased, and the wind, changing its direction, sent the clouds flying to the east, whence they had come. About dawn, Private Chad wick, who had slept most soundly, was aroused by the barking of the dogs, and got up to look after the horses. As he slipped quietly out of the house he saw a muffled figure crossing the yard.

"Halt!" he cried, giving the challenge of a sentinal. "Who goes there?"

"Nobody ner nothin' that 'Il bite you, I reckon," was the somewhat snappish response. It was the voice of Pelly. She was looking up and across the mountains to where a bright red glare was reflected on the scurrying clouds. The density of the atmosphere was such that the movements of the flames were photographed on the clouds, rising and falling, flaring and fad ing, as though the dread spirits of the storm were waving their terrible red banners from the mountain.

"What can that be?" asked Chadwick, after he had watched the singular spectacle a moment.

Polly laughed aloud, almost jovously. She knew it was Israel's beacon. She knew that the red reflections, waving over the farther spur of the mountain and over the the remedy. I most heartly thank for it. valley that nestled so peacefully below, would summon half a hundred hen and boys-the entire congregation of Antioch Church, where her father was in the habit of holding forth on the first Sunday of each month. She knew that Israel was safe, and the knowledge restored her good humor.

"What did you say it was?" · Chadwick inquired again, his curi- Pastor h

osity insisting on an explanation. 'It's jest a fire, I reckon," Polly calmly replied. "Ef it's a house

burnin' down, it can't be helped. Water couldn't save it now."

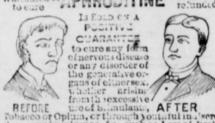
Whereupon she pulled the shawl from over her head, tripped into the house, and went about prepar-He went noiselessly about the ing breakfast, singing merrily. homespun satchel with a supply of solf generally useful; but he re-

sented the appearance of a peddler thing he does not understand. "I'm goin' up to the Rock," he Chadwick thought out his theory

[To be Con i ned.]

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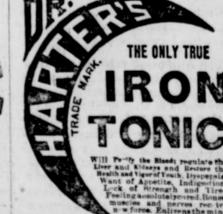
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