
MARY JANE HOLMES
BAD HUGH

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Bad Hugh

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

Table of Contents

SPRING BANK

Table of Contents

A large, old-fashioned, weird-looking wooden building, with strangely shaped bay windows and stranger gables projecting here and there from the slanting roof, where the green moss clung in patches to the moldy shingles, or formed a groundwork for the nests the swallows built year after year beneath the decaying eaves. Long, winding piazzas, turning sharp, sudden angles, and low, square porches, where the summer sunshine held many a fantastic dance, and where the winter storm piled up its drifts of snow, whistling merrily as it worked, and shaking the loosened casement as it went whirling by. Huge trees of oak and maple, whose topmost limbs had borne and cast the leaf for nearly a century of years, tall evergreens, among whose boughs the autumn wind ploughed mournfully, making sad music for those who cared to listen, and adding to the loneliness which, during many years, had invested the old place. A wide spreading grassy lawn, with the carriage road winding through it, over the running brook, and onward 'neath graceful forest trees, until it reached the main highway, a distance of nearly half a mile. A spacious garden in the rear, with bordered walks and fanciful mounds, with climbing roses and creeping vines showing that somewhere there was a taste, a ruling hand, which, while neglecting the somber building and suffering it to

decay, lavished due care upon the grounds, and not on these alone, but also on the well-kept barns, and the whitewashed dwellings in front, where numerous, happy, well-fed negroes lived and lounged, for ours is a Kentucky scene, and Spring Bank a Kentucky home.

As we have described it so it was on a drear December night, when a fearful storm, for that latitude, was raging, and the snow lay heaped against the fences, or sweeping-down from the bending trees, drifted against the doors, and beat against the windows, whence a cheerful light was gleaming, telling of life and possible happiness within. There were no flowing curtains before the windows, no drapery sweeping to the floor, nothing save blinds without and simple shades within, neither of which were doing service now, for the master of the house would have it so in spite of his sister's remonstrances.

Some one might lose their way on that terrible night, he said, and the blaze of the fire on the hearth, which could be seen from afar, would be to them a beacon light to guide them on their way. Nobody would look in upon them, as Adaline, or 'Lina as she chose to be called, and as all did call her except himself, seemed to think there might, and even if they did, why need she care? To be sure she was not quite as fixey as she was on pleasant days when there was a possibility of visitors, and her cheeks were not quite so red, but she was looking well enough, and she'd undone all those little tags or braids which disfigured her so shockingly in the morning, but which, when brushed and carefully arranged, did give her hair that waving appearance she so much desired. As for himself, he never meant to do anything of

which he was ashamed, so he did not care how many were watching him through the window, and stamping his heavy boots upon the rug, for he had just come in from the storm Hugh Worthington piled fresh fuel upon the fire, and, shaking back the mass of short brown curls which had fallen upon his forehead, strode across the room and arranged the shades to his own liking, paying no heed when his more fastidious sister, with a frown upon her dark, handsome face, muttered something about the "Stanley taste."

"There, Kelpie, lie there," he continued, returning to the hearth, and, addressing a small, white, shaggy dog, which, with a human look in its round, pink eyes, obeyed the voice it knew and loved, and crouched down in the corner at a safe distance from the young lady, whom it seemed instinctively to know as an enemy.

"Do, pray, Hugh, let the dirty things stay where they are," 'Lina exclaimed, as she saw her brother walk toward the dining-room, and guessed his errand. "Nobody wants a pack of dogs under their feet. I wonder you don't bring in your pet horse, saddle and all."

"I did want to when I heard how piteously he cried after me as I left the stable to-night," said Hugh, at the same time opening a door leading out upon a back piazza, and, uttering a peculiar whistle, which brought around him at once the pack of dogs which so annoyed his sister.

"I'd be a savage altogether if I were you!" was the sister's angry remark, to which Hugh paid no heed.

It was his house, his fire, and if he chose to have his dogs there, he should, for all of Ad, but when the pale, gentle-

looking woman, knitting so quietly in her accustomed chair, looked up and said imploringly:

"Please turn them into the kitchen, they'll surely be comfortable there," he yielded at once, for that pale, gentle woman, was his mother, and, to her wishes, Hugh was generally obedient.

The room was cleared of all its canine occupants, save Kelpie, who Hugh insisted should remain, the mother resumed her knitting, and Adaline her book, while Hugh sat down before the blazing fire, and, with his hands crossed above his head, went on into a reverie, the nature of which his mother, who was watching him, could not guess; and when at last she asked of what he was thinking so intently, he made her no reply. He could hardly have told himself, so varied were the thoughts crowding upon his brain that wintry night. Now they were of the eccentric old man, who had been to him a father, and from whom he had received Spring Bank, together with the many peculiar ideas which made him the strange, odd creature he was, a puzzle and a mystery to his own sex, and a kind of terror to the female portion of the neighborhood, who looked upon him as a woman-hater, and avoided or coveted his not altogether disagreeable society, just as their fancy dictated. For years the old man and the boy had lived together alone in that great, lonely house, enjoying vastly the freedom from all restraint, the liberty of turning the parlors into kennels if they chose, and converting the upper rooms into a hay-loft, if they would. No white woman was ever seen upon the premises, unless she came as a beggar, when some new gown, or surplice, or organ, or chandelier, was needed for

the pretty little church, lifting its modest spire so unobtrusively among the forest trees, not very far from Spring Bank. John Stanley didn't believe in churches; nor gowns, nor organs, nor women, but he was proverbially liberal, and so the fair ones of Glen's Creek neighborhood ventured into his den, finding it much pleasanter to do so after the handsome, dark-haired boy came to live with him; for about that frank, outspoken boy there was then something very attractive to the little girls, while their mothers pitied him, wondering why he had been permitted to come there, and watching for the change in him, which was sure to ensue.

Not all at once did Hugh conform to the customs of his uncle's household, and at first there often came over him a longing for something different, a yearning for the refinements of his early home among the Northern hills, and a wish to infuse into Chloe, the colored housekeeper, some of his mother's neatness. But a few attempts at reform had taught him how futile was the effort, Aunt Chloe always meeting him with the argument:

"'Taint no use, Mr. Hugh. A nigger's a nigger; and I spec' ef you're to talk to me till you was hoarse 'bout your Yankee ways of scrubbin', and sweepin', and moppin' with a broom, I shouldn't be an atomer white-folksey than I is now. Besides Mas'r John, wouldn't bar no finery; he's only happy when the truck is mighty nigh a foot thick, and his things is lyin' round loose and handy."

To a certain extent this was true, for John Stanley would have felt sadly out of place in any spot where, as Chloe said, "his things were not lying round loose and handy," and as

habit is everything, so Hugh soon grew accustomed to his surroundings, and became as careless of his external appearance as his uncle could desire. Only once had there come to him an awakening—a faint conception of the happiness there might arise from constant association with the pure and refined, such as his uncle had labored to make him believe did not exist. He was thinking of that incident now, and as he thought the veins upon his broad, white forehead stood out round and full, while the hands clasped above the head worked nervously together, and it was not strange that he did not heed his mother when she spoke, for Hugh was far away from Spring Bank, and the wild storm beating against its walls was to him like the sound of the waves dashing against the vessel's side, just as they did years ago on that night he remembered so well, shuddering as he heard again the murderous hiss of the devouring flames, covering the fatal boat with one sheet of fire, and driving into the water as a safer friend the shrieking, frightened wretches who but an hour before had been so full of life and hope, dancing gayly above the red-tongued demon stealthily creeping upward from the hold below, where it had taken life. What a fearful scene that was, and the veins grew larger on Hugh's brow while his broad chest heaved with something like a stifled sob as he recalled the little childish form to which he had clung so madly until the cruel timber struck from him all consciousness, and he let that form go down—down 'neath the treacherous waters of Lake Erie never to come up again alive, for so his uncle told when, weeks after the occurrence, he awoke from the

delirious fever which ensued and listened to the sickening detail.

"Lost, my boy, lost with many others," was what his uncle had said.

He heard the words as plainly now as when they first were spoken, remembering how his uncle's voice had faltered, and how the thought had flashed upon his mind that John Stanley's heart was not as hard toward womenkind as people had supposed. "Lost"—there was a world of meaning in that word to Hugh more than any one had ever guessed, and, though it was but a child he lost, yet in the quiet night, when all else around Spring Bank was locked in sleep, he often lay thinking of that child and of what he might perhaps have been had she been spared to him. He was thinking of her now, and as he thought visions of a sweet, pale face, shadowed with curls of golden hair, came up before his mind, and he saw again the look of bewildered surprise and pain which shone in the soft, blue eyes and illumined every feature when in an unguarded moment he gave vent to the half infidel principles he had learned from his uncle. Her creed was different from his, and she explained it to him so earnestly, so tearfully, that he had said to her at last he did but jest to hear what she would say, and, though she seemed satisfied, he felt there was a shadow between them—a shadow which was not swept away, even after he promised to read the little Bible she gave him and see for himself whether he or she were right. He had that Bible now hidden away where no curious eye could find it, and carefully folded between its leaves was a curl of golden hair. It was faded now, and its luster was

almost gone, but as often as he looked upon it, it brought to mind the bright head it once adorned, and the fearful hour when he became its owner. That tress and the Bible which inclosed it had made Hugh Worthington a better man. He did not often read the Bible, it is true, and his acquaintances were frequently startled with opinions which had so pained the little girl on board the*St. Helena*, but this was merely on the surface, for far below the rough exterior there was a world of goodness, a mine of gems, kept bright by memories of the angel child which flitted for so brief a span across his pathway and then was lost forever. He had tried so hard to save her—had clasped her so fondly to his bosom when with extended arms she came to him for aid. He could save her, he said—he could swim to the shore with perfect ease and so without a moment's hesitation she had leaped with him into the surging waves, and that was about the last he could remember, save that he clutched frantically at the long, golden hair streaming above the water, retaining in his firm grasp the lock which no one at Spring Bank had ever seen, for this one romance of Hugh's seemingly unromantic life was a secret with himself. No one save his uncle had witnessed his emotions when told that she was dead; no one else had seen his bitter tears or heard the vehement exclamation: "You've tried to teach me there was no hereafter, no heaven for such as she, but I know better now, and I am glad there is, for she is safe forever."

These were not mere idle words, and the belief then expressed became with Hugh Worthington a firm, fixed principle, which his skeptical uncle tried in vain to eradicate. "There was a heaven, and she was there," comprised nearly

the whole of Hugh's religious creed, if we except a vague, misty hope, that he, too, would some day find her, how or by what means he never seriously inquired; only this he knew, it would be through her influence, which even now followed him everywhere, producing its good effects. It had checked him many and many a time when his fierce temper was in the ascendant, forcing back the harsh words he would otherwise have spoken, and making him as gentle as a child; and when the temptations to which young men of his age are exposed were spread out alluringly before him, a single thought of her was sufficient to lead him from the forbidden ground.

Only once had he fallen, and that two years before, when, as if some demon had possessed him, he shook off all remembrances of the past, and yielding to the baleful fascinations of one who seemed to sway him at will, plunged into a tide of dissipation, and lent himself at last to an act which had since embittered every waking hour. As if all the events of his life were crowding upon his memory this night, he thought of two years ago, and the scene which transpired in the suburbs of New York, whither immediately after his uncle's death he had gone upon a matter of important business. In the gleaming fire before him there was now another face than hers, an older, a different, though not less beautiful face, and Hugh shuddered as he thought how it must have changed ere this—thought of the anguish which stole into the dark, brown eyes when first the young girl learned how cruelly she had been betrayed. Why hadn't he saved her? What had she done to him that he should treat her so, and where was she now? Possibly she

was dead. He almost hoped she was, for if she were, the two were then together, his golden-haired and brown, for thus he designated the two.

Larger and fuller grew the veins upon his forehead, as memory kept thus faithfully at work, and so absorbed was Hugh in his reverie that until twice repeated he did not hear his mother's anxious inquiry:

"What is that noise? It sounds like some one in distress."

Hugh started at last, and, after listening for a moment he, too, caught the sound which had so alarmed his mother, and made 'Lina stop her reading. A moaning cry, as if for help, mingled with an infant's wail, now here, now there it seemed to be, just as the fierce north wind shifted its course and drove first at the uncurtained window of the sitting-room, and then at the ponderous doors of the gloomy hall.

"It is some one in the storm, though I can't imagine why any one should be abroad to-night," Hugh said, going to the window and peering out into the darkness.

"Lyd's child, most likely. Negro young ones are always squalling, and I heard her tell Aunt Chloe at supper time that Tommie had the colic," 'Lina remarked opening again the book she was reading, and with a slight shiver drawing nearer to the fire.

"Where are you going, my son?" asked Mrs. Worthington, as Hugh arose to leave the room.

"Going to Lyd's cabin, for if Tommie is sick enough to make his screams heard above the storm, she may need some help," was Hugh's reply, and a moment after he was ploughing his way through the drifts which lay between the house and the negro quarters.

"How kind and thoughtful he is," the mother said, softly, more to herself than to her daughter, who nevertheless quickly rejoined:

"Yes, kind to niggers, and horses, and dogs, I'll admit, but let me, or any other white woman come before him as an object of pity, and the tables are turned at once. I wonder what does make him hate women so."

"I don't believe he does," Mrs. Worthington replied. "His uncle, you know, was very unfortunate in his marriage, and had a way of judging all our sex by his wife. Living with him as long as Hugh did, it's natural he should imbibe a few of his ideas."

"A few," 'Lina repeated, "better say all, for John Stanley and Hugh Worthington are as near alike as an old and young man well could be. What an old codger he was though, and how like a savage he lived here. I never shall forget how the house looked the day we came, or how satisfied Hugh seemed when he met us at the gate, and said, 'everything was in spendid order,'" and closing her book, the young lady laughed merrily as she recalled the time when she first crossed her brother's threshold, stepping, as she affirmed, over half a dozen dogs, and as many squirming kittens, catching her foot in some fishing tackle, finding tobacco in the china closet, and segars in the knife box, where they had been put to get them out of the way.

"But Hugh really did his best for us," mildly interposed the mother. "Don't you remember what the servants said about his cleaning one floor himself because he knew they were tired!"

"Did it more to save the lazy negroes' steps than from any regard for our comfort," retorted 'Lina. "At all events he's been mighty careful since how he gratified my wishes. Sometimes I believe he perfectly hates me, and wishes I'd never been born," and tears, which arose from anger, rather than any wounded sisterly feeling, glittered in 'Lina's black eyes.

"Hugh does not hate any one," said Mrs. Worthington, "much less his sister, though you must admit that you try him terribly."

"How, I'd like to know?" 'Lina asked, and her mother replied:

"He thinks you proud, and vain, and artificial, and you know he abhors deceit above all else. Why, he'd cut off his right hand sooner than tell a lie."

"Pshaw!" was 'Lina's contemptuous response, then after a moment she continued: "I wonder how we came to be so different. He must be like his father, and I like mine—that is, supposing I know who he is. Wouldn't it be funny if, just to be hateful, he had sent you back the wrong child?"

"What made you think of that?" Mrs. Worthington asked, quickly, and 'Lina replied:

"Oh, nothing, only the last time Hugh had one of his tantrums, and got so outrageously angry at me, because I made Mr. Bostwick think my hair was naturally curly, he said he'd give all he owned if it were so, but I reckon he'll never have his wish. There's too much of old Sam about me to admit of a doubt," and half spitefully, half playfully she touched the spot in the center of her forehead known as her birthmark.

When not excited it could scarcely be discerned at all, but the moment she was aroused, the delicate network of veins stood out round and full, forming what seemed to be a tiny hand without the thumb. It showed a little now in the firelight, and Mrs. Worthington shuddered as she glanced at what brought so vividly before her the remembrance of other and wretched days. Adaline observed the shudder and hastened to change the conversation from herself to Hugh, saying by way of making some amends for her unkind remarks: "It really is kind in him to give me a home when I have no particular claim upon him, and I ought to respect him for that. I am glad, too, that Mr. Stanley made it a condition in his will that if Hugh ever married, he should forfeit the Spring Bank property, as that provides against the possibility of an upstart wife coming here some day and turning us, or at least me, into the street. Say, mother, are you not glad that Hugh can never marry even if he wishes to do so, which is not very probable."

"I am not so sure of that," returned Mrs. Worthington, smoothing, with her small, fat hands the bright worsted cloud she was knitting, a feminine employment for which she had a weakness. "I am not so sure of that. Suppose Hugh should fancy a person whose fortune was much larger than the one left him by Uncle John, do you think he would let it pass just for the sake of holding Spring Bank?"

"Perhaps not," 'Lina replied; "but there's no possible danger of any one's fancying Hugh."

"And why not?" quickly interrupted the mother. "He has the kindest heart in the world, and is certainly fine-looking if he would only dress decently."

"I'm much obliged for your compliment, mother," Hugh said, laughingly, as he stepped suddenly into the room and laid his hand caressingly on his mother's head, thus showing that even he was not insensible to flattery. "Have you heard that sound again?" he continued. "It wasn't Tommie, for I found him asleep, and I've been all around the house, but could discover nothing. The storm is beginning to abate, I think, and the moon is trying to break through the clouds," and, going again to the window, Hugh looked out into the yard, where the shrubbery and trees were just discernible in the grayish light of the December moon. "That's a big drift by the lower gate," he continued; "and queer shaped, too. Come see, mother. Isn't that a shawl, or an apron, or something blowing in the wind?"

Mrs. Worthington arose, and, joining her son, looked in the direction indicated, where a garment of some kind was certainly fluttering in the gale.

"It's something from the wash, I guess," she said. "I thought all the time Hannah had better not hang out the clothes, as some of them were sure to be lost."

This explanation was quite satisfactory to Mrs. Worthington, but that strange drift by the gate troubled Hugh, and the signal above it seemed to him like a signal of distress. Why should the snow drift there more than elsewhere? He never knew it do so before. He had half a mind to turn out the dogs, and see what that would do.

"Rover," he called, suddenly, as he advanced to the rear room, where, among his older pets, was a huge Newfoundland, of great sagacity. "Rover, Rover, I want you."

In an instant the whole pack were upon him, jumping and fawning, and licking the hands which had never dealt them aught save kindness. It was only Rover, however, who was this time wanted, and leading him to the door, Hugh pointed toward the gate, and bade him see what was there. Snuffing slightly at the storm, which was not over yet, Rover started down the walk, while Hugh stood waiting in the door. At first Rover's steps were slow and uncertain, but as he advanced they increased in rapidity, until, with a sudden bound and cry, such as dogs are wont to give when they have caught their destined prey, he sprang upon the mysterious ridge, and commenced digging it down with his paws.

"Easy, Rover—be careful," Hugh called from the door, and instantly the half-savage growl which the wind had brought to his ear was changed into a piteous cry, as if the faithful creature were answering back that other help than his was needed there.

Rover had found something in that pile of snow.

CHAPTER II

Table of Contents

WHAT ROVER FOUND

Table of Contents

Unmindful of the sleet beating upon his uncovered head Hugh hastened to the spot, where the noble brute was licking a face, a baby face, which he had ferreted out from beneath the shawl trapped so carefully around it to shield it from the cold, for instead of one there were two in that rift of snow—a mother and her child! That stiffened form lying there so still, hugging that sleeping child so closely to its bosom, was no delusion, and his mother's voice calling to know what he was doing brought Hugh back at Last to a consciousness that he must act, and that immediately.

"Mother," he screamed, "send a servant here, quick! or let Ad come herself. There's a woman dead, I fear. I can carry her, but the child, Ad must come for her."

"The what?" gasped Mrs. Worthington, who, terrified beyond measure at the mention of a-dead woman, was doubly so at hearing of a child. "A child," she repeated, "whose child?"

Hugh, made no reply save an order that the lounge should be brought near the fire and a pillow from his mother's bed. "From mine, then," he added, as he saw the anxious look in his mother's face, and guessed that she shrank from having her own snowy pillow come in contact with the wet, limp figure he was depositing upon the lounge. It was a slight, girlish form, and the long brown hair,

loosened from its confinement, fell in rich profusion over the pillow which 'Lina brought half reluctantly, eying askance the insensible object before her, and daintily holding back her dress lest it should come in contact with the child her mother had deposited upon the floor, where it lay crying lustily.

The idea of a strange woman being thrust upon them in this way was highly displeasing to Miss 'Lina, who haughtily drew back from the little one when it stretched its arms out toward her, while its pretty lip quivered and the tears dropped over its rounded cheek.

Meantime Hugh, with all a woman's tenderness, had done for the now reviving stranger what he could, and as his mother began to collect her scattered senses and evince some interest in the matter, he withdrew to call the negroes, judging it prudent to remain away a while, as his presence might be an intrusion. From the first he had felt sure that the individual thrown upon his charity was not a low, vulgar person, as his sister seemed to think. He had not yet seen her face distinctly, for it lay in the shadow, but the long, flowing hair, the delicate hands, the pure white neck, of which he had caught a glimpse as his mother unfastened the stiffened dress, all these had made an impression, and involuntarily repeating to himself, "Poor girl, poor girl," he strode a second time across the drifts which lay in his back yard, and was soon pounding at old Chloe's cabin door, bidding her and Hannah dress at once and come immediately to the house.

An indignant growl at being thus aroused from her first sleep was Chloe's only response, but Hugh knew that his

orders were being obeyed.

The change of atmosphere and restoratives applied had done their work, and Mrs. Worthington saw that the long eyelashes began to tremble, while a faint color stole into the hitherto colorless cheeks, and at last the large, brown eyes unclosed and looked into hers with an expression so mournful, so beseeching, that a thrill of yearning tenderness for the desolate young creature shot through her heart, and bending down she said, "Are you better now?"

"Yes, thank you. Where is Willie?" was the low response, the tone thrilling Mrs. Worthington again with emotion.

Even 'Lina started, it was so musical, and coming near she answered: "If it's the baby you mean, he is here, playing with Rover."

There was a look of gratitude in the brown eyes, which closed again wearily. With her eyes thus closed, 'Lina had a fair opportunity to scan the beautiful face, with its delicately-chiseled features, and the wealth of lustrous brown hair, sweeping back from the open forehead, on which there was perceptible a faint line, which 'Lina stooped down to examine.

"Mother, mother," she whispered, drawing back, "look, is not that a mark just like mine?"

Thus appealed to, Mrs. Worthington, too, bent down, but, upon a closer scrutiny, the mark seemed only a small, blue vein.

"She's pretty," she said. "I wonder why I feel so drawn toward her?"

'Lina was about to reply, when again the brown eyes looked up, and the stranger asked hesitatingly:

"Where am I? And is he here! Is this his house?"

"Whose house?" Mrs. Worthington asked.

The girl did not answer at once, and when she did her mind seemed wandering.

"I waited so long," she said, "but he never came again, only the letter which broke my heart. Willie was a baby then, and I almost hated him for a while, but he wasn't to blame. I wasn't to blame. I'm glad God gave me Willie now, even if he did take his father from me."

Mrs. Worthington and her daughter exchanged glances, and the latter abruptly asked:

"Where is Willie's father?"

"I don't know," came in a wailing sob from the depths of the pillow.

"Where did you come from?" was the next question. The young girl looked up in some alarm, and answered meekly:

"From New York. I thought I'd never get here, but everybody was so kind to me and Willie, and the driver said if 'twan't so late, and he so many passengers, he'd drive across the fields. He pointed out the way and I came on alone."

The color had faded from Mrs. Worthington's face, and very timidly she asked again:

"Whom are you looking for? Whom did you hope to find?"

"Mr. Worthington. Does he live here?" was the frank reply; whereupon 'Lina drew herself up haughtily, exclaiming:

"I knew it. I've thought so ever since Hugh came home from New York."

'Lina was about to commence a tirade of abuse, when the mother interposed, and with an air of greater authority than she generally assumed toward her imperious daughter, bade her keep silence while she questioned the stranger, gazing wonderingly from one to the other, as if uncertain what they meant.

Mrs. Worthington had no such feelings for the girl as 'Lina entertained.

"It will be easier to talk with you," she said, leaning forward, "if I know what to call you."

"Adah," was the response, and the brown eyes, swimming with tears, sought the face of the questioner with a wistful eagerness, as if it read there the unmistakable signs of a friend.

"Adah, you say. Well, then, Adah, why have you come to my son on such a night as this, and what is he to you?"

"Are you his mother?" and Adah started up. "I did not know he had one. Oh, I'm so glad. And you'll be kind to me, who never had a mother?"

A person who never had a mother was an anomaly to Mrs. Worthington, whose powers of comprehension were not the clearest imaginable.

"Never had a mother!" she repeated. "How can that be?"

A smile flitted for a moment across Adah's face, and then she answered:

"I never knew a mother's care, I mean."

"But your father? What do you know of him?" said Mrs. Worthington, and instantly a shadow stole into the sweet young face, as Adah replied:

"Only this, I was left at a boarding school."

"And Hugh? Where did you meet him? And what is he to you?"

"The only friend I've got. May I see him, please?"

"First tell what he is to you and to this child," 'Lina rejoined. Adah answered calmly:

"Your brother might not like to be implicated. I must see him first—see him alone."

"One thing more," and 'Lina held back her mother, who was starting in quest of Hugh, "are you a wife?"

"Don't, 'Lina," Mrs. Worthington whispered, as she saw the look of agony pass over Adah's face. "Don't worry her so; deal kindly by the fallen."

"I am not fallen!" came passionately from the quivering lips. "I am as true a woman as either of you—look!" and she pointed to the golden band encircling the third finger.

'Lina was satisfied, and needed no further explanations. To her, it was plain as daylight. In an unguarded moment, Hugh had set his uncle's will at naught, and married some poor girl, whose pretty face had pleased his fancy. How glad 'Lina was to have this hold upon her brother, and how eagerly she went in quest of him, keeping back old Chloe and Hannah until she had witnessed his humiliation.

Somewhat impatient of the long delay, Hugh sat in the dingy kitchen, when 'Lina appeared, and with an air of injured dignity, bade him follow her.

"What's up now that Ad looks so solemn like?" was Hugh's mental comment as he took his way to the room where, in a half-reclining position sat Adah, her large, bright eyes fixed eagerly upon the door through which he entered,

and a bright flush upon her cheek called up by the suspicions to which she had been subjected.

Perhaps they might be true. Nobody knew but Hugh, and she waited for him so anxiously, starting when she heard a manly step and knew that he was coming. For an instant she scanned his face curiously to assure herself that it was he, then with an imploring cry as if for him to save her from some dreaded evil, she stretched her little hands toward him and sobbed: "Mr. Worthington, was it true? Was it as his letter said?" and shedding back from her white face the wealth of flowing hair, Adah waited for the answer, which did not come at once. In utter amazement Hugh gazed upon the stranger, and then exclaimed:

"Adah, Adah Hastings, why are you here?"

In the tone of his voice surprise and pity were mingled with disapprobation, the latter of which Adah detected at once, and as if it had crushed out the last lingering hope, she covered her face with her hands and sobbed piteously.

"Don't you turn against me, or I'll surely die, and I've come so far to find you."

By this time Hugh was himself again. His rapid, quick-seeing mind had come to a decision, and turning to his mother and sister, he said:

"Leave us alone for a time."

Rather reluctantly Mrs. Worthington and her daughter left the room. Deliberately turning the key in the lock, Hugh advanced to her side, groaning as his eye fell upon the child, which had fallen asleep again.

"I hoped this might have been spared her," he thought, as, kneeling by the couch, he said, kindly: "Adah, I am more

pained to see you here than I can express. Why did you come, and where is—"

The name was lost to 'Lina, and muttering to herself: "It does not sound much like a man and wife," she rather unwillingly quitted her position, and Hugh was really alone with Adah.

Never was Hugh in so awkward a position before, or so uncertain how to act. The sight of that sobbing, trembling wretched creature, whose heart he had helped to crush, had perfectly unmanned him, making him almost as much a woman as herself.

"Oh, what made you? Why didn't you save me?" she said, looking up to him with an expression of reproach.

He had no excuse. He knew how innocent she was, and he held her in his arms as he would once have held the Golden Haired, had she come to him with a tale of woe.

"Let me see that letter again," he said.

She gave it to him; and he read once more the cruel lines, in which there was still much of love for the poor thing, to whom they were addressed.

"You will surely find friends who will care for you, until the time when I may come to really make you mine."

Hugh repeated these words twice, aloud, his heart throbbing with the noble resolve, that the confidence she had placed in him by coming there, should not be abused, for he would be true to the trust, and care for the poor, little, half-crazed Adah, moaning so piteously beside him, and as he read the last line, saying eagerly:

"He speaks of coming back. Do you think he ever will? or could I find him if I should try? I thought of starting once,

but it was so far; and there was Willie. Oh, if he could see Willie! Mr. Worthington, do you believe he loves me one bit?"

Hugh said at last, that the letter contained many assurances of affection.

"It seems family pride has something to do with it. I wonder where his people live, or who they are? Did he never tell you?"

"No," and Adah shook her head mournfully.

"Would you go to them?" Hugh asked quickly; and Adah answered:

"Sometimes I've thought I would. I'd brave his proud mother—I'd lay Willie in her lap. I'd tell her whose he was, and then I'd go away and die." Then, after a pause, she continued: "Once, Mr. Worthington, I went down to the river, and said I'd end my wretched life, but God held me back. He cooled my scorching head—He eased the pain, and on the very spot where I meant to jump, I kneeled down and said: 'Our Father.' No other words would come, only these: 'Lead us not into temptation.' Wasn't it kind in God to save me?"

There was a radiant expression in the sweet face as Adah said this, but it quickly passed away and was succeeded by one of deep concern when Hugh abruptly said:

"Do you believe in God?"

"Oh, Mr. Worthington. Don't you? You do, you must, you will," and Adah shrank away from him as from a monster.

The action reminded him of the Golden Haired, when on the deck of the *St. Helena* he had asked her a similar question, and anxious further to probe the opinion of the girl beside him, he continued: