

"I have seen him," replied the pedlar, evasively.

"And where?—who is he?—what is he?"

"A jail-bird!" and the pedlar swung his sack over his shoulder; "that boy, young as he looks, I saw in court myself; and heard his sentence, — ten months. He's a hard one; you'd do well to look keeferful after him."

Oh! there was something so horrible in the word *jail*, the poor woman trembled as she laid away her purchases, nor could she be easy till she called the boy in, and assured him that she knew that dark part of his history.

Ashamed, distressed, the child hung down his head; his cheeks seemed bursting with his hot blood; his lips quivered, and anguish was painted as vividly upon his forehead as if the words were branded in his flesh.

"Well," he muttered, his whole frame relaxing as if a burden of guilt or joy had suddenly rolled off, "I may as well go to ruin at once;—there's no use in my trying to do better—everybody hates me and despises me—nobody cares about me. I may as well go to ruin at once."

"Tell me," said the woman, who stood off far enough for flight if that should be necessary—"How came you to go so young to that dreadful place?—Where was your mother!—where?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the boy with a burst of grief that was terrible to behold,—"oh! I hain't got any mother; I hain't had no mother ever since I was a baby. If I'd only had a mother," he continued, his anguish growing vehement, and the tears gushing out from his strange looking grey eyes, "I wouldn't 'a been bound out, and kicked and cuffed, and laid on to with whips. I would not 'a been saucy, and got knocked down, and then run away, and stole because I was hungry. Oh! I hain't got no mother; I hain't had no mother since I was a baby."

The strength was all gone from the poor boy, and he sank on his knees sobbing great choking sobs, and rubbing the hot tears away with his knuckles. And did that woman stand there unmoved? Did she coldly bid him pack up and be off—the jail-bird?

No, no; she had been a mother, and, though all her children slept under the cold sod in the church yard, was a mother still.

She went up to that poor boy, not to hasten him away, but lay her fingers on his head, to tell him to look up, and from henceforth find in her a mother. Yes, she even put her arm about the neck of the forsaken, deserted child; she poured from her mother's heart sweet womanly words of counsel and tenderness.

Oh! how sweet was her sleep that night, how soft was her pillow. She had linked a poor suffering heart to hers by the most silken, the strongest bands of love. She had plucked some thorns from the path of a little sinning but striving mortal. None but the angels could witness her holy joy, and not envy.

Did the boy leave her?

Never. He is with her still; a vigorous, manly, promising youth. The low character of his countenance has given place to an open, pleasing expression, with depth enough to make it an interesting study. His foster-father is dead, his good foster-mother aged and sickly, but she knows no want. The once poor outcast is her only dependence, and nobly does he repay the trust.

"He that saveth a soul from death, hideth a multitude of sins."

### Little Lena.

BY HELEN HUGHES

Not long after we came West, we took a house on the next lot to one on which three German emigrant families had settled. They often came over to borrow household utensils, and it was really amusing to see the odd motions and grimaces they would make in the effort to have us understand them. In this way I soon came to know them by their faces. One little girl I especially got acquainted with by way of coaxing. She was a sweet little one, with dark eyes, a high forehead—almost hidden by soft, brown hair—and such a pretty little mouth, so rose-bud like in its delicate beauty, that I could not help being interested in its little owner. I knew that she was an only one and a pet, by the richness of the queer German ornaments she wore, though I could not find out to which of the families she belonged, till one day, in wandering too far, she fell, and then a girlish looking woman came out of the house, and catching up the child, covered her with kisses, calling her pet names, I was sure, though I could not understand what she said. A handsome