

the bright air seemed to smite her like a knife. If she could only die there and then—sink into the earth and be forgotten!

But that moment one softer thought crept into her heart—Jenas, her father! Oh, how glad she was he had not seen this day! He who loved his children so dearly; it would have broken his heart.

Taken from the evil to come. Yes, that was true concerning the kind father. Hope thanked God now for that day of bitter bereavement.

And next, a vision rose before her eyes of Harold ministering to the old man's wants, saying pleasant words to him. Hope could see the wan smile on the sick man's face—the smile she would at the time have given gold to buy. And it was Harold who had called it up—the same Harold who had blasted her life this day.

But could she be making some great mistake—conjuring up all these horrors out of the mere absence of her husband? Mrs. Smith said he might be gone after the luggage? Might not that be the case?

Hope drew a deep breath of relief. Then she thought once again of the missing money—of the ten sovereigns in her purse. 'There was not there overnight. Oh, woe, woe! There was something very wrong in it all!

But Harold might have been persuaded against his better judgment to do this evil deed. If she could only see him for one moment—put before him in plain colours his sin—surely, surely he would listen to her and return with the bag.

Not that Hope cared one straw for the actual money. If an ordinary thief had carried off that bag she would not have wasted an hour's lamentation over it, but would have been the first to suggest setting to work to repair the loss.

'Please, are you going out this morning, Mrs. Westall, because then I could dust your room?'

It was the child again. Her words, however, inspired Hope with an idea. She *would* go out—go to the Harbour Hotel and seek her husband. Things might not be so bad as she fancied. Harold might only have borrowed the money to convince these

speculators that he was really possessed of capital. They might have professed to doubt his bare word, and Harold would be so easily roused by a slighting assertion of any kind.

'I am going out,' Hope answered the child quietly. And then she dressed herself with trembling haste and sallied out into the street.

She was clever at finding her way, thanks to her London training, and soon found herself at the hotel. A few loungers were standing outside, amongst them a lad she recognised as a fellow-passenger. She timidly mentioned to him her husband's name.

'Oh yes; he started early this morning,' returned the boy.

'With Mr. —'

'With the New Land-Purchase Company,' was the glib reply.

Hope had now recovered her self-possession.

'Ah yes, I suppose so,' she answered. 'Did they mean to go far to-day? My husband hardly knew the plans of the Company last night.'

(She was already trying to shelter his reputation, you see, even as a husband.)

'Only to New Northam,' was the answer of a polite official of the hotel.

'Oh, thank you,' said Hope, forcing a smile.

'Hope the gentlemen will soon return,' was the stereotyped comment of the clerk.

'Oh, I hope they will,' cried Hope, a little too earnestly. The man stared, and the poor thing hastened to explain away her words. 'Of course business must be attended to,' she said, 'but I feel strange—all alone.'

Then she said, 'Good morning,' and turned quickly away. She could not answer for herself what she might say next. And now she knew the worst, what should she do? Follow Harold to New Northam, wherever that might be? Yes, she must make one effort to drag him out of the mire, if possible.

She seemed to see how it had all come about—the tempting bait, the insinuations that Harold could not take advantage of their offers, that he was too much under his wife's control. Yes, Hope felt they would use that weapon to wound and drive their