

with the money in it upstairs,' she said, 'it will be safer there than here.'

Harold's face flushed. He stood up and looked out of the window into the darkness.

'All right.' The words were spoken with an attempt at ease; still they struck Hope, even then, as having a curious ring.

'Go to bed at once if you are tired,' Harold added, 'and I will bring the bag to you. It has all my things in, you know, and—and—I shall want some of them.'

So Hope said 'Good-night' and went slowly upstairs. As she was dropping asleep Harold came in and stayed a few minutes in the room. She heard the bag put down on the floor by the bedside. 'Thank you,' she murmured, and then she fell sound asleep.

The first day in a new place always dawns strangely on a traveller. When Hope woke, however, she caught a glimpse of brilliant sky through the little window.

'This is New Zealand,' her heart said. 'The place where we shall begin our new life. Oh! I am glad the sun is shining, it is a good omen.'

After that first burst of hopefulness came a troubled thought of Harold. Had he slept at all on that hard, horsehair sofa? Would the landlady be an early riser? she wondered.

Hope dressed quickly; said a very short morning prayer—she would finish it by-and-by, when her mind was at ease about Harold. She little guessed how far distant that time would be.

She crept quietly downstairs, and softly opened the sitting-room door. It was barely seven o'clock. Harold might not be awake yet. But he was awake—awake and gone out. The landlady had let him out, and he had bidden her tell his wife he should not be back to breakfast.

'Gone after your heavy luggage, Mrs. Westall, I expect,' said the cheery woman with a smile.

'Oh dear! But I wish you had let me know,' said poor Hope, disappointed. 'I would have got him his breakfast before he went out.'

'Just what I told him,' declared Mrs. Smith, 'but he said he was in a hurry. Still,

that's no reason you should fast, ma'am. The water's on the boil, and my little Mary will lay the table in no time. The gentleman will perhaps be back before you have done, and if not, I'm one as always keeps my kitchen fire going, and can get him a cup of hot tea any time.'

Mrs. Smith meant to cheer the young wife, who seemed fretted that her husband had gone out without her 'the first day of all'; but Hope was thankful when the door closed on her hostess, and left her at liberty to worry and wonder over what could have taken Harold out so early. Not those dreadful men at the hotel she did hope.

After breakfast 'little Mary,' a self-possessed young colonist of nine years or thereabouts, came in for orders concerning the dinner. Hope wanted some trifle which necessitated, as she thought, the payment of ready money. She took out her purse and opened it mechanically; suddenly her eyes were riveted on the ordinary little dark purse in a stony state of amaze. What had happened? Who had put those ten golden coins into it? And for what purpose could it be? Harold? But where had he taken them from, and what did he mean by the act?

The child's sharp voice roused her from her state of utter bewilderment. 'If you haven't got the change, ma'am, I can ask my ma!'

'Yes, do.' Hope spoke calmly, but it seemed to her as if she must add, 'And I will give you all I possess if you will only go away and leave me alone.'

Perhaps her face expressed this, however, for little Mary vanished at once. Then Hope got up by a sudden impulse and reached the bag—Harold's carpet-bag, which she had mechanically brought down with her—the bag which contained that other baize bag with its shining contents. She undid the straps, unlocked it—the key was in the lock where her husband had left it—and, one by one, she drew out the contents.

A stony horror came over her as she realised the fact. The money was gone! And Harold was gone too! Of that she had now no doubt. Gone to ruin; gone to