

**THE ORNAMENTS
DISCOVERED:
A STORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649187560

The ornaments discovered: a story by Mrs. Mary Hughs

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MRS. MARY HUGHS

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" And so this is the dress which you have prepared for me? —
" Yes ; do you not think it very pretty ?" . . . page 150.

THE
ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED.

A Story.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"AUNT MARY'S TALES"—"THE METAMORPHOSES"—
"THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT"—"STORIES FOR CHILDREN"—
"ALCHEMIST."

A NEW EDITION REVISED.

LONDON:
WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,
HOLBORN HILL.

THE
ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED.

PART THE FIRST.

ON a dark cold night, in the middle of November, as Mr. Hardy was travelling in a stage-coach from London to Norwich, he was roused from a sound sleep, at the end of a stage, by the coachman's opening the door of the carriage, and begging leave to look for a parcel which was in the box under Mr. Hardy's seat. The opening of the door admitted a violent gust of wind and rain, which was very unpleasant to the feelings of the sleeping passengers, and roused them to a consciousness of the situation of those who were on the outside of the vehicle. "I hope, coachman, you have a good thick coat on, to guard you against the cold and the wet," said Mr. Hardy.

"I have a very good one, sir," replied the

man, "but I have lent it to a poor little girl that we have on the top; for my heart bled for her, poor thing! she had so little clothing to keep her warm."

"A child exposed on the outside of the coach, on such a night as this!" exclaimed Mr. Hardy; "I am sure it would be very wrong of us to let her stay there. Do let us have her in immediately; it is quite shocking to think of her being in such a situation."

"Oh, no!" cried a gentleman opposite; "we can do nothing with her here, it is quite out of the question. The coach is already full, and she will be so wet, that we might as well be on the outside ourselves as sit near her. Besides, she is a poor child in charge of the master of a workhouse, and one does not know what she may have about her."

"Why, as to that, sir," replied the coachman, "I believe she is as clean as any child needs to be, though she is rather delicate looking, poor thing; but she is a fine little creature, and deserves better fare than she is likely to get where she is going."

"Let her come in, at any rate," said Mr. Hardy; "for, poor or rich, she is equally sen-

sible of cold; and no one, I am sure, who has a child of his own, can bear the idea of her being so exposed; as to her being wet, I will wrap her in my plaid, and take her on my knee, so that no one can feel any inconvenience from it."

This silenced the gentleman's objections, and, the rest of the company agreeing to it, the coachman was desired to bring the child in, which he gladly did; and the dry plaid being rolled about her, Mr. Hardy took her on his knee, and, putting his arm round her waist, clasped her, with benevolence and self-satisfaction, to his breast. "I am afraid you are very cold, my poor little girl;" said he.

"I was very cold indeed, till the coachman was so good to me as to let me have his coat," replied she, in a very sweet and cheerful voice; "but you have made me warmer still," she added; and, as she spoke, she laid her head upon the breast of her benevolent friend, and was asleep in a few minutes.

"The coachman showed a great deal of concern for her," said one of the passengers; "I could hardly have expected so much feeling in the driver of a stage-coach."

“I believe there is much more humanity amongst the lower classes of people than is generally supposed,” replied Mr. Hardy; “for we seldom meet with one who is deaf to the appeals of childhood or helplessness.”

His companion was too sleepy to dispute the point, and the whole party soon sunk into the same state of torpor, from which this little incident had roused them; and they were only occasionally disturbed by the changing of horses, or the coachmen's applications for the usual fee, till the full dawn of day compelled them to shake off their drowsiness.

When Mr. Hardy awoke, he found his little companion still in a sound sleep, and he thought, with satisfaction, of the comfortable rest which he had procured for her, with very little inconvenience to himself. He was glad, too, that he had interested himself for her, before he saw her; for, had he seen the prepossessing face which he then beheld, he might have suspected that his interference had been prompted by her beauty, as much as occasioned by her distress. She appeared to be about five years old, of a fair complexion, and regular features; but Mr. Hardy was particularly in-