

BAD HUGH

CHAPTER I

SPRING BANK

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 hung 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