

strength of the hills, the leaping streams, and the beauty of the broom and the heather.

During one of these fits of homesickness he received a letter from his uncle, full of reproaches. Squire Pierson had been ruined by the crafty rascal who had promised him fabulous wealth. Nothing but the sale of the timber and part of the land could now save the honour of the old name, and for this transfer Hugh's signature was necessary. It is impossible to describe how powerfully this news affected him. He had often smiled at his father's romantic affection for the old home and acres—he had fancied himself beyond the influence of traditionary names—he had professed perfect indifference to the claims of long descent. But oh, it hurt him like a wound to think of any one but a Pierson claiming the hills whose every dingle and hollow he knew. He felt that they must be saved at any sacrifice, and he hastily gathered together his wealth and, with his two sons, returned to his native land. Once having set his face homeward, no speed could keep pace with his love and longing; and, moving in that direction, things looked so different.

It was a self-accusing and humbled son that stood one winter night before the great oaken door of Pierson Grange. But good angels had gone before and prepared his way and his welcome. The first glimpse he got of the poor, broken old man would have touched a harder heart than Hugh's. He was sitting alone in the deepening twilight, gazing into the fitful blaze of mingled peat and wood. He turned wearily, and with a gesture of annoyance, when Hugh opened the door and entered the room with a child by either hand. Then he rose up quickly—fear, wonder, hope, each for a moment holding him captive. But love was lord of all.

“Hugh! my son, my son!”

“Father! my father!”

And I think the angels were gladder that night, and that they rejoiced with the old man whose only son had been “lost, and was found.”

Indeed, there was not a cottager in the whole district who did not rejoice. For the young squire having come home again meant something good for every one. He had returned none too soon. Everything was changed and ruinous; want had become familiar in houses long famous for a rude plenty, and many of the old and best shepherds had been compelled to leave their native valley.

Hugh's heart was filled with self-reproach. What availed his long exile? All that he had made barely sufficed to redeem his inheritance. But his clear head soon made itself apparent. The mill, under his management, became a lucrative investment, the old shepherds resumed their care of the flocks, the old servants returned to the farm, and anxiety and dishonour no longer brooded over grange and cottage.

The squire gave up gladly to Hugh's direction all business