

with his proud reticence, and also with the angry petulance of the rector, who would not believe in the sanity of any man who could leave a rich and comfortable home for the wilds of Australia and a dream of love.

When I went again the following summer I was still more angry at Hugh; for I found in his place a man who I was sure was the evil genius of the Piersons. He had persuaded the squire to build a mill on a beautiful stream that leaped from hill to hill, about a quarter of a mile from the grange. So far I had nothing to object; the wool was better spun at home than sent to Manchester or Preston; but somehow I mistrusted this man as manager of the squire's wool and money.

We cannot account for our instincts, though we may regard them, and experience proved mine were true prophets. Ten years sufficed to dissipate the squire's twenty thousand pounds, and not only that, but to cumber the Pierson house and lands with many threatening claims. Nor were these the only changes—the rector was dead, nearly all the old herders had left the squire, and he was fast sinking under an influence he was powerless to control. In his sorrow and perplexity the wise young son whom he had driven from his side haunted him continually. If Hugh would then have turned his face homeward his father would have run gladly to meet him.

Hugh's life had not been exempt from loss and change. Alice had faded from his side and sight. I do not like to say "she died," but I know a fair form was laid asleep for immortality beneath the shades of untrodden woods. Hugh's grief was like his love, deep down in the very roots of his nature. He had long been a religious man, he now became an enthusiast. Men of his temper easily do, especially if their vocations keep them much in the great solitudes of Nature. In these vast silences God's voice becomes audible, and men dimly recall the lost mother-tongue in which unfallen humanity communed with God and the angels.

For the last few years Alice had been to Hugh the sun and end of existence. He accepted her removal as the reproof of his idolatrous and selfish affection. Loving the two sons she had left him with all the strength of his tenacious nature, he strove now to make this love the fountain of human kindness to every soul within his reach. Under the great trees which shadowed his wild but lovely home, he gathered, whenever he was able, the men and women from the nearest stations, and told there, in the Australian wilderness, the same dear story which had touched his heart under the Cumberland Mountains. The frail, impassioned speaker had long since gone "to the land very far off," but thus do holy men, being dead, yet speak.

Such constant exercise of kindness made very tender Hugh's heart, and as his own sons began to stand beside him "like his youth," strange and yearning thoughts for his desolate old father moved him. Nay, he frequently looked with distaste over the rich but monotonous land he owned, and longed wearily for the