

'What! as a missionary?' said Jack.

'Not to preach, Jack; I'm not orthodox enough,' looking at his father and shaking his head; 'but to build railroads and lend a hand to some poor chap, if I can.'

'Could you not find work nearer home, my boy?' asked the father; 'there is plenty of both kinds near us here, surely.'

'Lots of work, but not mine, I fear,' answered Graeme, keeping his eyes away from his mother's face. 'A man must do his own work.'

His voice was quiet and resolute, and glancing at the beautiful face at the end of the table, I saw in the pale lips and yearning eyes that the mother was offering up her first-born, that ancient sacrifice. But not all the agony of sacrifice could wring from her entreaty or complaint in the hearing of her sons. That was for other ears and for the silent hours of the night. And next morning when she came down to meet us her face was wan and weary, but it wore the peace of victory and a glory not of earth. Her greeting was full of dignity, sweet and gentle; but when she came to Graeme she lingered over him and kissed him twice. And that was all that any of us ever saw of that sore fight.