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form, but not quite despairingly. They cling to the hope that Thatcher may return to the fold.

'And I cannot but think,' says the Pastor, 'that we judge ourselves and others far too much by the point where we stand, the position we have reached. We forget that, just as we leave our footprints on the road, so every step of the way makes its mark upon us. The man who finds a short cut to the goal is, for better or worse, a very different being from the man who came all the way round. I cannot think it is all waste.'

When the meeting was over, the Pastor withdrew to his little vestry, and sat gazing into the fire. Say what one would, it was a terrible blow, this defection of Thatcher's, and perhaps, if one had been wiser and kinder, it might have been averted.

The feeling of loneliness and isolation grew on the Pastor as the years went on. Instinctively he held aloof from his deacons: instinctively the young men, for whom his heart yearned, seemed to hold aloof from him. It was all very sad.

With a heavy sigh, he donned his coat, and made his way out into the raw wintry night. On the threshold a young man was awaiting him.

'May I walk home with you, sir?' said Dalglish affectionately.