

Epilogue.

THIRTY years later, on the anniversary of Antonia's death, George Stobart, Bishop of Northborough—the fighting bishop, as some of his admirers called him, a profound scholar, a fiery controversialist, a celibate and an ascetic, once famous as a Methodist field preacher, and now the leader of the extreme High Church party—sat by the fireside in his library in the palace at Northborough, a lofty and spacious room, where a pair of wax candles on the writing-table served but to accentuate the darkness. He sat leaning forward in the candlelight, with one elbow on the arm of his chair, looking at a long dark ringlet that lay in his open hand, bound with a black ribbon to which was attached a label in Wesley's writing, "Antonia's hair, cut after death by her sorrowing friend, J. W."

"Only a woman's hair," murmured the bishop. "Tis said that Swift spoke those words in pure cynicism over a ringlet of his ill-used Stella. Only a woman's hair! And for me the memory of a life's love, the one earthly relic which reminds the priest that he was once a man. Shall we meet and know each other again, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage? Or is it all a dream, nothing but a dream, as she thought?"