

heaven to the wayfarers on life's desert? Who is there to stand by the sick man's bed and hold the cross before his closing eyes? Who is there to lay him with words of hope in his long home? Why, my brethren, I look up in the face of God, and I answer, boldly, confidently, yet humbly and suppliantly, 'Here am I!' I, with all my infirmities of temper and mind and body; I, broken by old age, but with a spirit ever willing; I, troubled on every side, without with fightings, within with fears; I—I—strengthened, however, by the grace of God, and commissioned by his apostolic ministry. And am I alone? Not so. There are chariots and horses of fire about me. There are angels round us on every side. Am I weak? An angel stays me up. Do my hands falter? An angel sustains them. Am I weary to death with disappointment? My head rests on an angel's bosom, and an angel's arms encircle me. Who will raise his hand to tear down the house of God? Who will venture to rob God of his inheritance? An angel is at hand. He beareth not the sword in vain: he saith to the assailer, 'Here am I!' And believe me: the world may roll its course through centuries more; and ocean may fret our rocks, as he has fretted them through ages past; but as long as one stone stands upon another of Morwenna's church, so long will there be a priest to answer God's call, and say, 'Here am I!' and so long will there be an angel to stay him up in his agony and weakness, saying, 'Here am I!' and to meet the spoiler, with his sword and challenge, 'Here am I!'

There was ever a sad undertone in the eccentric vicar's character. He felt his isolation in mind from all around him. His best companions were his books, the waves, and the clouds. His wife was a charming, accomplished lady, and she was one of the few who thoroughly understood her gifted husband. During her long invalidism his devotion to her was full and complete. For several years before her death she was totally blind. Mr. Hawker spent a great deal of time in reading to her, and conversing with her—all that loving care could do to make her last days happy. At length the end came, and at the ripe age of eighty-one she went home to God. After her death he was continually depressed in spirits. He moped about the cliffs, and lost interest in almost everything. Then he came to death's door with brain fever; but gradually recovered. At length a new interest grew up in his heart. A lady of Polish extraction was governess in a gentleman's family in the neighbourhood. She won the vicar's affection and he made her his wife. She was a Catholic, and in her husband's last illness sent for a priest to see him. With that ever eager desire of the Catholic Church to make a proselyte, the priest administered to the unconscious vicar the sacraments of baptism, penance, extreme unction, and communion. His friends were justly indignant at the action of his wife. It was taking an unfair advantage of a dying man.