

'I could have loved and mothered him, Alan, in spite of his title and his grand doings. And when I heard him speak about those cruel heathen who killed his father he minded me on Stephen. His heart is a bairn's heart, but it serves the Lord wi' a man's strength.'

Thus they spoke of him who had gone out of his way to do a Christlike deed, at what cost to himself they did not know.

It is certain that had Amory and Christine met earlier her story never would have been written.

Mrs. Grier went about her tasks blithely for the next day or two, getting the Manse ready for the return of its mistress, her eyes often wandering to the white road that followed the dark windings of the Loch to the Ford.

Night and day she dreamed of the home-coming of Christine, and at last one day the dream came true.

The minister was absent at the usual monthly Presbytery meeting at Kinellan, the day of which Christine had not forgotten. She had chosen the time of her arrival well, reaching the Inn of the Ford about two of the afternoon, where she dismissed the man and left her things, saying that she would send down for them later on.

Her demeanour and speech were so natural that the man from the Junction and Mrs. Maclaren of the Inn as well were satisfied that all the stories which had been rife concerning the affairs of the Manse were lies. Young Mrs. Grier behaved exactly like a person who had been absent on family affairs, and who was returning at the earliest convenient moment.

After she had inquired for the welfare of the Inn folks and again impressed upon them the fact that she would send down for her things, she stepped through the sparse wood to the kirkyard and made her way to the grave under the rowans. And when she reached it and saw it so freshly cared for, and a little glass filled with some newly-blown snowdrops under the stone, her breath came