

tion of a new Epiphany. Hugh longed to take the preacher home and give him rest and refreshment. But he durst not; and indeed there was no need. He sat down on the wicker-chair, from which he had spoken, and the women brought him oaten cakes and new milk; then he bade them farewell and went over the mountain to the nearest town, where he was to stay that night.

Had it not been for Hugh's quarrel with the rector it is not likely that the old man (who was easy and indifferent about most things but his dinner) would have taken any notice of the service or of Hugh's presence at it. But he believed it to have been deliberately planned for his mortification and reproof. The squire readily adopted his friend's opinion, and when it was discovered that the orator was the Methodist preacher from the Penrith Circuit their anger knew no bounds. All the herders and retainers on the Pierson estate were notified that to listen to another "irregular" sermon was to lose their employment.

Hugh and his father had been accustomed to dispute amicably over every change, but about this subject the old man would listen to no reason. So Hugh refused to go to church at all, and, partly as a matter of conscience and partly in anger, allied himself with the Methodists in Penrith. This move was treated, both by the squire and the rector, with contemptuous oblivion, as a topic not possible to be discussed over the table of a gentleman and the parish priest. Just at first, perhaps, Hugh felt himself annoyed by this silence. He thought himself somewhat of a martyr, and would have preferred that it should be recognized. But as he became more familiar with his new spiritual guide a better spirit moved him.

This intimacy was destined to become a much dearer and closer one. A sudden thunder-storm induced Hugh one day to take shelter in the house of the preacher. He entered it a free man, but before he left he had surrendered his whole heart to the lovely girl he found dwelling there. And I do not think he was to blame, for to be honestly in love with Alice Atherton was better for any man than a course at college. If he was rude or selfish he would never dare to show these traits in her presence, and if he was much with her he must needs forget or conquer them. She had great personal beauty, a nature rich and fragrant as "those lands toward sunrising," and such a cheerful temper that in the rainiest weather she shone about the house like a piece of sunshine.

It was not (as I have said) Hugh's nature to do anything in a hurry, but a true faith and a true love are beyond nature, and in both these cases he succumbed to feelings which were beyond reason.

With the help of his good hunter he now found his way to Penrith always once, sometimes twice, a week. And for a long time no one, unless it was the groom, suspected it. When the circumstance came to his father's knowledge it gave him little trouble. Some girl, of course, was in the case; he expected that,