

would retrace their steps to the door of the now deserted church, and backward turning, would cast one longing, lingering look behind, then set their peaceful faces towards their home, the long rough journey near its end at last.

The elders, including the four recently added to their number, met as usual for preparatory prayer. More than ordinary tenderness seemed to mark their petitions, for their hearts were with the absent; and the senior elder thrilled us when he prayed for "him whom we had hoped to begin his ministry this day, and for Thy servant who was wont in the days that are passed to serve with us before Thine altar."

As I walked into the pulpit, I caught a glimpse of Margaret's face, and never have I seen sweeter peace than rested upon it. Her eyes reposed on the snowy cloth that hid the emblems of a greater sacrifice, and she knew, as few could know, the deep sacramental joy.

But hardly had my heart warmed at sight of her, before sorrow chilled its ardour; for right opposite Margaret's pew was that of Michael Blake—and its emptiness smote my heart with pain. Not there, nor in his rightful place among the elders, was my old-time friend. Where, I could not help but wonder, where to-day is the unhappy man who has cast his ministry behind him? And bitter memories of varied verdicts flitted before me as I went up the pulpit steps.