

and graceful spire, then in course of building; and as we had no one to state our case, our house was rated, not according to its reduced, but according to its original value. And so the entire rental of the second year, with several pounds additional which I had to subtract from my hard-earned savings as a mason, were appropriated in behalf of the ecclesiastical Establishment of the country, by the builders of the church and spire. I had attained my majority when lodging in the fragment of a salt store-house in Gairloch; and, competent in the eye of the law to dispose of the house on the Coal-hill, I now hoped to find, if not a purchaser, at least some one foolish enough to take it off my hands for nothing. I have since heard and read a good deal about the atrocious landlords of the poorer and less reputable sort of houses in our large towns, and have seen it asserted that, being a bad and selfish kind of people, they ought to be rigorously dealt with. And so, I dare say, they ought; but at the same time I cannot forget, that I myself was one of these atrocious landlords from my fifth till nearly my twenty-second year, and that I could not possibly help it, and was very sorry for it.

On the fourth day after losing sight of the Hill of Cromarty, the Leith smack in which I sailed was slowly threading her way, in a morning of light airs and huge broken fog-wreaths, through the lower tracts of the Frith of Forth. The islands and distant land looked dim and gray through the haze, like objects in an unfinished drawing; and at times some vast low-browed cloud from the sea applied the sponge as it rolled past, and blotted out half a county at a time; but the sun occasionally broke forth in partial glimpses of great beauty, and brought out in bold relief little bits of the landscape,—now a town, and now an islet, and anon the blue summit of a hill. A sunlit wreath rose from around the abrupt and rugged Bass as we passed; and my heart leaped within me as I saw, for the first time, that stern Patmos of the devout and brave of another age looming dark and high through the diluted mist, and enveloped for a moment, as the cloud parted, in an amber-tinted glory. There had been a little Presbyterian oasis