

larks carolled above, and the waking nestlings querulously chirped. Simon, with his heavy heart, felt himself at variance with this joyous world of spring; and pressed on, eager to be out of sight and hearing of all those glad and innocent waking things, eager above all to escape from the maddening thoughts which pursued him. She has no love for me—her love is dead. All, all is at an end!

He had not known with how much hope he had set out on his anxious quest, until now, on his return, he realised that hope had fled. Who shall describe the sinking of the heart with which his eyes fell on the old house where he had lived and dreamed for so many years! He would never dream again. But he must live there, live out his lonely life in desolation of spirit.

The windows of the oak room were all aglow with the radiance of the newly-risen sun. What was this? one of them was open. Was Susan already astir? With a groan Simon pictured to himself her surprise and joy at his return. And he must smile and make a show of pleasure, and drop no hint of his misery and shame.

But lo! as he drew nearer he saw a figure pass before the windows; a figure too slight to be taken for Susan's—not Dolly's for it was too tall; besides, it was clad in white. With a muffled cry he hastened forward, and as he approached the open window the figure in the room turned, and with a faltering step drew near it too. And thus it came to pass that they stood and looked at one another as they had looked on that far away night when she had first taken possession of his life; but oh, how different was the face which now bent towards him, what meaning had the eyes that gazed into his own! The arch gaiety of the child-maiden was gone, but in its place he read something which Rachel's eyes had never held for him before: the deep tenderness, the passionate pleading of the woman—of the wife.