

which as a girl she had sat between them, listless and impatient, wondering at times why Ephraim remained at home.

Her uncle and aunt were now lying in the graveyard. She paused a moment at the thought, looking at the small host of modest headstones surrounded by wild-flowers and half-fledged shrubs. It has never been the custom in Manchester to cultivate God's acre. Above, the branches of the nut-trees stretched themselves in the sweet spring air—they too were just leafing.

Standing by the low, unpainted rail, Susannah wondered in what part of the yard her aunt and uncle lay.

She observed that the small coterie of deacons had passed on to the road and dispersed, leaving only one of their number, who was locking the main door with an air of responsibility. Susannah did not look twice; she knew that this man was Ephraim. He stooped slightly to fit the key in the lock; then, evidently having forgotten something, pushed the door again and went inside.

Susannah did not wait; she went up the graveyard path and in where the great square windows cast each a strip of light athwart the dark pews. Ephraim turned from his errand and met her in the aisle.

"Ephraim."

Ephraim Croom fell back a step or two, as if his breath was set too quick by joy or fear.