

being a high open space, breezy and bright. On it he was building a few cottages—a cottage convalescent hospital he meant it to be—in memory of his late wife.

“I had planned a marble monument,” he wrote to Hannah, “a recumbent figure of herself, life-size, with two angels watching at head and foot. But I found this would cost nearly as much as the cottage, and it struck me that Rosa would have liked something that was not only a memorial of the dead, but a blessing to the living.”

Hannah agreed with him, and that little circumstance gave her a favourable impression of her brother-in-law. She was also touched by the minute arrangements he made for her journey, a rather long one, and her reception at its end. Some of his plans failed—he was not able to meet her himself, being sent for suddenly to the Mount-House—but the thoughtful kindness remained, and Miss Thelluson was grateful.

She wound slowly up the hill in her brother-in-law’s comfortable carriage, and descended at his door, the door of a much grander house than she expected—till she remembered that since Rosa’s death Mr. Rivers’s income had been doubled by succeeding to the fortune of a maternal uncle. With him, wealth accumulated upon wealth, as it seems to do with some people; perhaps, alas! as a balance-weight against happiness.

Miss Thelluson asked herself this question, in a sad kind of way, when she entered the handsome modern house—very modern it seemed to her, who had been living in old castles these three years, and very luxurious too. She wondered much whether she should feel at home here; able to be happy herself, or make the widower happy—the forlorn man, who had every blessing in life except the crowning one of all, a good wife: the “gift that cometh from the Lord.” Was this worse or better for him? He had had it, and it had been taken away. Hannah thought, with a compassion for the living that almost lessened her grief for the dead, how desolate he must often feel, sitting down to his solitary meals, wandering through his empty garden—Rosa had so loved a garden—and back again to his silent room. How he must miss his wife at every step, in everything about him. A loss sharper even than that one—the sharpness of which she knew so well. But then, she and Arthur had never been married.

“I must try and help him as much as I can—my poor brother-in-law!” thought she to herself as she came into the dreary house; all the more dreary because it was such a handsome house; and then she thought no more either of it or its master. For did it not contain what was infinitely more interesting to her—the baby?

Some people will smile at what I am going to say: and yet it is truth,—a truth always solemn, sometimes rather sad likewise. There are women in whom mother-love is less an instinct or an affection than an actual passion—as strong as, sometimes even stronger than, the passion of love itself; to whom the mere thought of little hands and little feet—especially “*my* little hands, *my* little feet,” in that fond appropriation with which one poet-mother puts