

track of common-place conversation, and though he only spoke of Rosa as "she,"—it seemed impossible to him to call her by her name—the mere reference to his dead wife was more than he could bear. All the flood-gates of his grief burst open.

"Isn't this a change!—a terrible, terrible change!" he cried, looking up to Hannah with anguish in his eyes. A child's anguish could not have been more appealing, more utterly undisguised. And sitting down, he covered his face with his hands, and wept—also like a child.

Hannah wept too, but not with such a passionate abandonment; it was against her nature, woman though she was. Her own long-past sorrow, which, she fancied, most resembled his, and had first drawn her to him with a strange sympathy, had been a grief totally silent. From the day of Arthur's death she never mentioned her cousin's name. Consolation she had never asked or received from any human being—this sort of affliction could not be comforted. Therefore she scarcely understood, at first, how Bernard Rivers, when the seal was once broken, poured out the whole story of his loss in a continuous stream. For an hour or more he sat beside her, talking of Rosa's illness and death, and all he had suffered; then going over and over again, with a morbid intensity, his brief, happy married life; apparently finding in this overflow of heart the utmost relief, and even alleviation.

Hannah listened, somewhat surprised, but still she listened. The man and the woman were as unlike as they well could be; yet, thus thrown together—bound together, as it were by the link of a common grief, their very dissimilarity, and the necessity it involved of each making allowances for, and striving heartily not to misjudge the other, produced a certain mutual interest, which made even their first sad evening not quite so sad as it might have been.

After a while, Hannah tried to lure Mr. Rivers, out of his absorbing and pitifully self-absorbed grief into a few practical matters; for she was anxious to get as clear an idea as she could of her own duties in the household and the parish: her duties only; her position, and her rights—if she had any—would, she knew, fall into their fitting places by-and-by.

"Yes, I have a large income," said Mr. Rivers, sighing; "far too large for me and that poor little baby. She would have enjoyed it, and spent it wisely and well. You shall spend it instead. You shall have as much money as you want, weekly or monthly; just as she had. Oh, how clever she was! how she used to bring me her books to reckon over, and make such fun out of them, and fall into such pretty despair if they were the least bit wrong. My own Rosa! My merry, happy wife!—yes, I know I made her happy! She told me so,—almost her last words."

"Thank God for that!"

"I do."

Hannah tried to put into the heart-stricken man the belief—essentially a woman's—that a perfect love, even when lost, is still an eternal possession—a pain so scared that its deep peace often grows into absolute content. But he did not seem to understand this at