

in the frightful cataclysm which had destroyed so much that men prize in this world.

"I blame myself, nobody but myself, Tibbie," she went on feverishly. "First of all I did wrong marrying him, when I did not care. Then he found out about Archie. He saw us together, and nothing could convince him that I was not regretting my marriage, and hating him. I have tried my best to make him think otherwise, but a man like Edmund trusts nothing but the evidence of his eyes, and he imagined that I cared for Archie Mackerrow still. It was not true, was it, Tibbie?" she added with a swift innocent glance as a child might have asked some simple question depending utterly on the wisdom of the person who would answer.

"Darling, you have dwelt too long morbidly on one idea," said Tibbie soothingly, though her voice shook with her effort to steady it.

"But you don't answer. You know me, don't you, Tib? I am not that kind of woman. If I married a man I would not think about another. I was not even thinking of Archie that day, when I met him, but ah, I could not convince Edmund. Then you see he got sullen and bitter, and all that was bad in him seemed to be roused. He would not believe anything I said, and his distrust of me made him hard to all the world outside, and prolonged the lock-out. I heard that last week they sent a deputation begging him to start the work again on his own terms, and he refused. He was not himself, he never has been himself since that ghastly day in Rochallan Woods. That's why I ask how God, if He has any power, and cares at all about human beings, can let such things happen. It was not fair. It was all so innocent, and just see what has come out of it! I wish I could lie down here and now and never wake any more."

Tibbie, still keeping firm hold of her arm, permitted her to wander on, realising that it was well her pent feelings should have vent. But this strange and