

some miracle of grace will change the man's heart. There is good in it; and it ~~was~~ touched. You'll touch it again."

"Never; for he knows, and I know, that irreparable wrong I did him when I married him without an atom of affection in my heart. Now, having wrung so much from me, will you hold your tongue, or will you not?"

She tried to smile with something of the old sweetness, but Tibbie only felt her rising tears.

"I think I'll go up and rummage in my boxes," she said ruefully. "I brought you things from the places we stayed at, penny nicknacks; heavens, how light-hearted I was there and how happy with those children. You've done something at least, Ailie; you've given that forlorn little family a mother, and it would be hard to say which loves you most."

Tibbie left her sister with that crumb of comfort and she did not see her a little later creeping towards the library door with that watching fear in her eyes which belongs only to the woman who is afraid.

Tibbie did not see her brother-in-law again that night, and the household by one consent retired early. But she was a long time getting to bed, thinking of the strange events of the past year that had changed the aspect of life for everyone of them. She mourned over many things, but most of all over Alison's loss of faith. It might be only temporary, but it marked an epoch of suffering against which Tibbie naturally rebelled. For Alison of all people in the world had least deserved it. She, who had all her life long been a martyr to duty, might very naturally have looked for some reward in the end. The great house was very still, and the August night was hot. A long time Tibbie leaned over the open casement looking across the dim spaces of the park, and often uplifting her eyes to the starry heavens. Neither smoke nor flame obscured them now, though a year ago she had seen the sky alight night after night with the glare of the furnaces, and felt the summer air heavy with the smoke