

only praying for the word from afar, that might be winged with hope and healing.

"After all, we don't belong here, Pat, and that's the whole meaning of life. It takes some of us a long time to realise it, and realisation can only come by the way of sorrow. This is only the beginning of things, the very beginning. The best is coming. It is Edie's now."

He seemed to be soothed, but sat down wearily as if his heart was tired.

"Alison!" he said suddenly, "you'll come back here. Edie loved you, and nobody else will bring up her bairn. Besides—I'm your bairn, more than ever I was. It is certain that if you don't come it'll all be up with me."

She promised, for what was there left to do? But a little later in the day her heart was torn betwixt two. As she sat with the family of her adoption in the drawing-room that evening, talking over their plans for the future, they spoke with one accord.

"You'll need to take a big house somewhere, a house that will hold us all, so that we can come and go as we like, and always know that it is home," said Anne, in quick business-like tones, to which Madge immediately said "Amen."

"And the door must be like heaven," continued Stephen whimsically, "not shut at all by night, for the moment that door is shut, something will happen to one, if not to all of us. It is only for you to decide where it is to be, England or Scotland; it is all the same to us, so that it is an open door."

Tibbie, overwhelmed and astonished that Alison could meet this wonderful demonstration of affection so calmly, burst into tears and fled from the room. Her tears were sweet, in spite of the pity of them. Never had life seemed so beautiful a thing. Ah, it is beautiful, and never more so than when the veil of tears is spread upon it, lighting up the diamond drops, illuminating the dark spaces of the heart,