

her voice had the crooning mother-note in it, that had been wont to soothe his fear-haunted boyhood.

"I don't forget that you are in the same boat, Ailie," he said confusedly. "But somehow it's different. Your man had, in a sense, lived his life. Ours was only beginning, and she was so sweet and fine a thing! Oh my God, and she is under the earth, and I am left! It isn't fair, it isn't fair!"

Alison, whom suffering had greatly taught, knew better than to attempt the stemming of the deluge. She let the storm work its will with him, hardly speaking herself at all; only listening, with now and then a word that had its work to do.

"Guy thought to comfort me by saying that if she had lived she must have been an invalid all her life. What mattered that to me? It would have been my joy to have waited on her, to fetch and carry, so that she might have a moment's ease. I never lived till she came to me, Ailie. What can I do now?"

"There is the bairn! It is all hers, Pat, hers and yours," said Alison at last, "I have nothing. You will have to care for him. She left him to you. I—I think she knew that she would not live after it, Pat."

"Why do you think that?" he asked in a fierce wonder.

"From what she said to me one day long, long ago, and again last Sunday when I came to sit with her while you went to the Bible Class. She spoke of the wind-flowers on the shore. She was fond of comparing herself to them, and I think she knew that she would be very little longer here than they. But she was very happy, Pat, and she loved you dearly. Your little year together was an idyll, for which you have to thank God, and then go on bravely to the end. It was all beautiful, and had no flaws or deeps in it as mine had."

Seeing that he was arrested by her words she went on steadily, hardly knowing herself what she said