

a wealth of comfort in the deep anguish of soul that compassed me about. There was nothing I could cling to—nothing to uphold me. Like a drowning man I would have snatched at a straw even; but there was nothing—nothing! That is a terrible word; one word only in all human utterance being more terrible still—too late! too late! Vainly I struggled; an agonizing fear consumed what was left of me.

And that which I would not call back stood up before my failing perception with an unsought clearness and completeness of vision—the life which lay behind me, and now was ebbing away. But little good had I done in that life and much evil. I saw it: it stood out as a fearful fact from the background of consciousness. I had lived a life of selfishness, ever pleasing my own desire. It was true, awfully true, that I had not followed the way of life, but the paths of death since the days even of childhood. And now I lay dying, a victim of my own folly, wretched, helplessly lost! One after another, my sins arose before me, crying for expiation; but it was too late now—too late for repentance. Despair only was left; the very thought of repentance had faded from the brain.

Not yet fifty years old, possessed of everything that could make life pleasant, and yet to die—it seemed impossible, though I felt that death even then had entered my being. There was death within me, and death without; it spoke from the half-light of the sick chamber; it spoke from every feature of the watchers about me; it spoke from the churchyard silence that curtained my couch. It was a fearful hour, and I, the chief person, the centre of all that horror—every eye upon me, every ear listening for my parting breath. A shudder went through me; I felt as one already buried—buried alive!

One thought of comfort seemed left—I snatched at it: it won't go worse with you than with most people! Is