

The man stood up, passing his hand across his brow. 'Sir,' he said earnestly, 'I respected him. For all he was a king, he treated me like a gentleman. He, too, had a young wife. Poor fellow, I wish he were alive, again !'

There were tears in the man's eyes as he spoke.

The third quarter struck as the king left the prison. He felt unutterably humiliated. The pity of his foe was harder to bear than the scorn of his friends. He would rather have died a thousand deaths than owe his life to such a man. And yet, because he was himself noble, he could not but rejoice to find nobility in another. He said to himself sternly that it was not worth what he had gone through. He reviewed his position in no very self-complacent mood. The affection he had so confidently relied upon was but a dream. The people he was fain to work for were not ripe for their own improvement. A foolish little child, a generous enemy, these were his only friends. After all, was it worth while to live ? Had he not better get back quietly and submit, making no further effort ? He had learnt his lesson ; he could 'lie down in peace, and sleep, and take his rest'. The eternal powers had justified themselves. What matter though every man had proved a liar ? The bitterness had passed away, and he seemed to see clearly.

Thick clouds had gathered over the moon, and the cold struck through him. All at once a sense of loneliness that cannot be described rushed over him, and his heart sank. Was there really no one who cared—no one ? He would have given anything at that moment for a look, a single word of real sympathy. He longed with sick longing for the assurance of love.

There were yet a few moments left. How had he borne to wait so long ? This, at least, he was sure of, and this was all the world to him. He began to find comfort and consolation in the thought ; he forgave—indeed he almost forgot—the rest. Yet he had fallen very low, for, as he stood at the door of his wife's room, he hesitated whether to go in. What if this, too,