

two candles, guttering now in their sockets, and a tall crucifix, ivory and black, lifting its arms in the midst. Before it stood two veiled vessels.

"He will speak before he passes," the doctor had told them the evening before; "I do not know whether he will be able to receive Viaticum."

Chris raised himself a little in his chair—he was stiff with leaning elbows on knees; and he stretched out his feet softly; looking down still at the bed.

His brother lay with his back to him; the priest could see the black hair, longer than Court fashion allowed now, the brown sinewy neck beneath; and one arm outlined over his hip beneath the piled clothes. The fingers were moving a little, contracting and loosening, contracting and loosening; and he could hear the long slow breaths.

Beyond sat Beatrice, upright and quiet, one hand in her lap, and the other holding the father's. The old man was bowed with his head on his other hand, as he had been for the last hour, his back bent forward with the burden, and his feet crossed before him.

From outside the noises grew louder as the morning advanced. There had been the sound of continual coming and going since it was light. Wheels had groaned and rattled up out of the distance and ceased abruptly; and the noise of hoofs had been like an endless patter over the stone-paving. And now, as the hours passed a murmur had been increasing, a strange sound like the wind in dry trees, as the huge crowd gathered.

Beatrice raised her eyes suddenly.

The fortress itself which had been quiet till now seemed to awaken abruptly.

The sound seemed to come to them up the stairs, but