

humble folk. Like Marlow, the writers all said they had risked their money on the faith of his good name. The letters altogether seemed to him to form a faintly heard cry for help from a great distance. Is it too late, my lord, to save us from the inevitable? For the sake of our blind faith in you, save your lordship's ruined but still obedient respectful servants.

While his wife sat pensively looking into the fire, he was smoothing and folding the letters.

He thought of the trial in that stuffy den of practised hirelings, and of his trial in the open court of public opinion. At this moment, hundreds, thousands of men were talking of him. Scattered wide all over the kingdom, these critics of the streets and taverns were speaking his name. Carelessly—a few words;—then the talk turns to something else. He could hear the vulgar lips—"And that Lord Brentwood, he was on the make, same as the others. He don't know nothing now. Oh, no. But he knew a thing or two when he started. He wasn't in it for 'is 'ealth—no blooming fear! I'd give the swab five years hard, for all 'e was a lord and a Member o' Government." These were the voices—scattered far and wide. But if you could collect them together, the voices would be a roaring volume of sound—from a multitude as great as ever gathered beneath a prince's windows to bellow scorn and rebellion.

Then he thought of all the men of his own class—how they would judge him. And then he thought of the few really big men of both political parties—they must, of course, be talking too. He thought of the grey old lords who held high office by right of birth, of the solemn commoners who had won it by force of merit. These should have been his peers—these were the men who in truth would try him. Only they were competent to form a court.

Anger and pride stirred him as he thought of them. They were immeasurably different from the abject business mob. They could handle millions of money, and nothing stuck to their strong, clean hands. He thought of the secrets they guard, the power they wield—of how they are given a pittance of five thousand a year and limitless power, of how they retire into private life poorer, much poorer for the toil and the burden. They would understand—they would know that he could not lie or cheat. But how would they judge him as a leader of men—as a trusted prince, surrounded by