

he could, however, was his duty—yes, if she wished it, he would go! He debated, where he sat smoking by the window one evening, whether she would wish it if she knew how dear she had grown to him; whether if he stammered to her something of his remorse— His pain had become almost intolerable.

The hour was very still. In the west, on the faint azure, some smears of flame colour lingered; then, while he stared out, faded, and hung in the sky like curls of violet smoke. Over the myriad tints of green came the low whinny of a horse. His wife sat sewing by the table, and, turning, he watched the rhythmical movement of her hand. A passionate longing assailed him to free his tongue from the weight that hampered it and cry to her he loved her, though she might not care to hear. He knocked the ashes from his pipe, and sauntered nearer.

"Aren't you going to smoke any more?" she said.

"Not now; I've been smoking all day."

"You should try to write without."

"I ought to—but I never could."

He touched the muslin on her lap diffidently—it *was* on her lap.

"What are you making—another pinafore?"

"Yes. Do you think it's pretty?"

His hand lay close to her own; but she held