

relatives, who must bear with each other in any event, quarrel. His sensitiveness had met a withering blast. He loved her still, he told himself, but in a new painful way, full of disquietude and actual enmity at moments. His good sense warned him that it was not a case where any outward or merely emotional reconciliation could produce a lasting effect. Truth, though never so stern, so humiliating, or so dangerous, must be uttered between his wife and himself. She had called him *unresponsive*. Now the word had first cut, then burned, then stung, then seared his memory. He still winced under it, owning its justification if he were judged by his manner, its falseness if the divine instinct of love had given her some understanding of his heart. But he had not shown her much sympathy, he knew, though he had been indulgent always. Had he ever crossed the lightest of her wishes? Indulgence, however, is not the same thing as fellow-feeling. Often, he had thought her wishes foolish—even tiresome. In the very act of granting them, he had perhaps taken no pains to conceal his disapprobation. As he questioned his conscience, he remembered something which he had recently read in some new philosophy founded on some very old saying, to the effect that conscience is merely an organ which obeys a man's dominant sentiment, that it is a thing more treacherous than either reason or nature itself.

“Passion . . .  
Is highest reason in a soul sublime.”