

"What could I do?" she said. "I had to use my own judgment."

"You had not. You had to use mine."

He paused impressively.

"It's no use, my child, fighting against the facts."

To Henry Laura was a little angry child, crying over the bitter dose of life. He had got to make her take it.

He towered over her, a Brodrick, the incarnate spirit of fact.

It was a spirit that revolted her. She stood her ground and defied it in its insufferable tyranny. She thought of how these men, these Brodricks, behaved to genius wherever they met it; how, among them, they had driven poor Jinny all but mad, martyring her in the name of fact. As for Owen, she knew what they had thought and said of him, how they judged him by the facts. If it came to that she could fight the Doctor with his own weapons. If he wanted facts he should have them; he should have all the facts.

"*This* is n't what's killing him," she said. "It's all the other things, the things he was made to do. Going out to Manchesteria — that began it. He ought never to have been sent there. Then — five years on that abominable paper. Think how he slaved on it. You don't know what it was to him. To have to sit in stuffy theatres and offices; to turn out at night in vile weather; to have to work whether he was fit to work or not."

He looked down at her very quietly and kindly. It was when people were really outrageous that a Brodrick came out in his inexhaustible patience and forbearance.

"You say he had to do all these things. Is that the fact?"

"No," said Laura, passionately, "it's the truth."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean it's what it amounted to. They — they drove him to it with their everlasting criticism and fault-finding and complaining."

"I should not have thought he was a man to be much affected by adverse criticism."

"You don't know," she retorted, "how he was affected. You