

THE HIGH HEART

"No, sir; not in my sense. I haven't felt it."

He tapped his foot with the old imperiousness. "Then—what?"

We were so near the fundamentals that again I felt I ought to give him nothing but the facts.

"I suppose Mrs. Rossiter meant that sometimes I should have been glad of a little more sympathy, and always of more—courtesy." I added: "From you, sir, I shouldn't have asked for more than courtesy."

Though only his profile was toward me and the hall was dim, I could see that his face was twitching. "And—and didn't you get it?"

"Do you think I did?"

"I never thought anything about it."

"Exactly; but any one in my position does. Even if we could do without courtesy between equals—and I don't think we can—from the higher to the lower—from you to me, for instance—it's indispensable. I don't remember that I ever complained of it, however. Mrs. Rossiter must have seen it for herself."

"I didn't want you to marry Hugh," he began, again, after a long pause; "but I'd given in about it. I shouldn't have minded it so much if—if my wife—"

He broke off with a distressful, choking sound in the throat, and a twisting of the head, as if he couldn't get his breath. That passed and he began once more.

"I've had great trials. . . . My wife! . . . And then the burden of this war. . . . They think—they think I don't care anything about it but—but just to make money. . . . I've always been misjudged. . . . They've put me down as hard and proud, when—"

"I could have liked you, sir," I interrupted, boldly. "I told you so once, and it offended you. But I've never