

THE LIFTED VEIL

to give her name. Though no such incident had occurred to him as yet, he was mentally prepared for it, just as he was mentally prepared for any extravagance of thought or caprice of conduct. When Mrs. Wedlock, his housekeeper, a stout, motherly person with a fresh complexion, a perceptible mustache, and an English husband, appeared at the study door to say, "There's a lady in the hall, sorr, and she won't tell her na-ame," he replied, as a matter of course, "Show her in."

He was living at the time in one of the narrow-fronted, high-stooped, brownstone houses in West Forty-eighth Street which had not yet been modernized or made over to business. As a man of means he had taken the whole house, Mr. and Mrs. Wedlock giving him all the service he required. In the drawing-room which looked on the street he installed the white-and-gold tapestried French furniture that had been his mother's, and closed the door upon it. Of the large back room with the southern exposure—a library or secondary drawing-room it must have been when a family occupied the house—he made a convenient study, from which a door led into the dining-room, forming a kind of *alc.* In these two rooms, with a bedroom overhead, he lived in a comfortless bachelor comfort, which had at least the advantage of space.

It was one of his homesick days, one of the days when he felt himself dwarfed and stunned by the city's overpowering soullessness. It was not that he was unaccustomed to great capitals. He knew London and Paris and Berlin and Petrograd, to say nothing of Munich, Vienna, and Rome. But in each of these centers he had found some phase of the human, the amenable, the urbane. They were for man rather than man for them. They could be subdued and utilized and made to serve a purpose. One