

THE LIFTED VEIL

sitting near the piano, and began on the minuet, it was impossible to say more; but Mrs. Jarrott's last words gave for an instant a new direction to Bainbridge's thoughts. In reality she was the one of his parishoners of whom he was somewhat afraid. He had sat down beside her not from choice, but because on the entry of the men she had beckoned to him and made room on a settee against the wall. A Juno in white satin, with a skin which at forty-five was still as rich and as even as cream, she had a manner of appealing to any man who happened to be near her as if she hung on his opinion. Bainbridge had noticed in his own case that if she hung on his opinion it was in a way to involve it with hers, and often to impart a sense of indorsing some subtle calumny.

But with the renewal of the strange harmonies he passed again into his strange dreams, especially as he had Clorinda Gildersleeve directly in his line of vision. Seated in a low chair almost in the center of the room, fanning herself slowly, her train shimmering about her feet, she stirred his imagination to the new questions, to the new relation of men and women to each other and to the world, of which this new music was in some sense the voice. In it emotion was intermingled with interrogation, and passion was restrained by sheer consciousness of itself. It was as far from the triumphant self-assurance of the nineteenth century as from the melodic sentiment of the eighteenth, and was perhaps nearer to life than either because of being more inarticulate, more troubled, more tortured, more eager for the basic and the ultimate. As Palliser played with a dreamy abandonment that made itself felt in the way his slim silhouette leaned back from the piano, while his eyes sought the cornice of the room as if looking into far spiritually peopled spaces, the tones