

THE LIFTED VEIL

don't marry some one else, who knows where you'll come out?"

She answered, while taking a cup of tea from a neat little maid who passed it on a tray. "My dear good man, where I come out is my own affair. I can take care of *myself* if you could do the same for *yourself*."

"I should like to be allowed to make the attempt."

"Yes; like a child walking in his sleep. When it comes to marriage a man like you is as fit to take care of himself as a stray pet lamb to avoid the traffic in Broadway. If the right woman doesn't get you the wrong one will; and that you can take from me."

"I'm willing to take anything from you, as I'm sure you must know. But may I ask if you see any signs of it?"

"It's not a question of what I see signs of; it's only one of what happens. The longer I know you're going round loose the more wretched it makes me."

"I see; I see. You want me to marry for your peace of mind, not for my own. Of course when you put it that way, anything I can do—"

"I don't put it that way. It's nothing to me, further than that I want to see you safe."

"Well, then, I'll let you know the minute I feel in danger."

"When I can't do any good. Nine times out of ten a drowning man doesn't know he's drowning till it's too late to pull him out. And when you could have a girl like Mary Galloway—"

"Ah, but could I?"

"You might if you tried. I don't say she's breaking her heart for you, but . . . Ah, well!" She rose with a sigh, while he placed her empty cup on a near-by table. "If she won't do I shall have to find some one else who will."