

THE LIFTED VEIL

grounds, it was that he was too perfect. A man had no business to be so handsome. It made him look, so Bainbridge chaffed him, like a figurine. The features might have been modeled in porcelain; in the sweep and upward curve of the fair mustache one rarely saw a hair displaced; in the droop of the long eyelashes over romantic gray eyes there was languor and poetry and passion, with all the emotional suggestions that set women's hearts a-beating and stir men's scorn. Evening dress fitted him as bark fits its stem, and his cravat seemed to bloom on him with the elegance of an orchid. When he lectured before business men's clubs, as he often did, and did ably, they said it was like hearing economic statistics and forecasts of new routes of trade from the lips of a Watteau shepherd or a *jeune premier*.

"Poor Leslie! Don't you think his good looks are a burden to him? He tries so hard to be taken seriously, and my husband says that he has just as much chance as a canary to be taken for a crane. What do *you* say?"

Mrs. Endsleigh Jarrott asked the question, as she asked all questions, as if it were a burning one, and Bainbridge the only authority in the world who could deal with it. They were seated now in the music-room, where Leslie was playing a sonatina by Ravel, and had paused in the interval between two movements. Bainbridge was sorry to have to speak, for the doing so broke the spell of strange dreams into which the strange harmonies had thrown him. Since it was necessary to respond, he merely said:

"He seems to bear up under it."

"Yes, *he* bears up," the lady declared, quickly, "perhaps better than poor Maggie does."

As Leslie ceased speaking to Mary Galloway, who was