

THE LIFTED VEIL

remarkable distinction who had entered Miss Higgins's apartment just as he himself had come away from it. Miss Galloway reflected, mentioning first one and then another, each of whom he set aside in turn as already a personal acquaintance. It was not till he described the costume—the dark-brown velvet, the dark-brown plumes, shading, as he remembered them, into green at the tips, with a green lining to the coat that fell slightly open as she moved—it was not till then that Miss Galloway nodded and said, in a low voice:

"Why, that was Mrs. Gildersleeve. Don't you know her? How strange! She's just come back from abroad. She's—she's sitting next to you."

Bainbridge remembered afterward that his feeling was like that of the spectator of a play at the moment when the outer asbestos curtain begins to rise. The time of sitting and doing nothing was coming to an end. There was a sense of approaching drama in the mental air. In the action he would have a part, if only that of an impassioned looker-on.

"She's a great friend of Maggie's," Miss Galloway continued to whisper, "and I believe a kind of cousin. When I have an opportunity I'll introduce you."

He turned slightly, getting a glimpse of a thin, graceful arm resting lightly on the table, with emeralds and diamonds in the bracelet on the wrist, and emeralds and diamonds in the rings on the fingers of a slender white hand. The dress was of green and silver, in which there were shadows and shimmerings as in a woodland summer lake, while more emeralds and diamonds starred the chain that hung round the slim neck and descended below the décolletage. The dark hair was worn in a knot of the simplest fashion, but a comb with an edge of diamonds