

THE LIFTED VEIL

"To me it seems both."

"Possibly; and yet so long as it does you'll be confused about yourself and perhaps go further astray."

He fancied she resented his language, since she again stirred uneasily and spoke in a tone slightly of offense. "I hadn't thought of myself precisely as having gone astray—"

"One doesn't unless one has the true norm of conduct before one. And yet whatever isn't normal is abnormal, just as whatever isn't straight is crooked."

"Oh, would you call it abnormal—doing as I did?"

"Abnormal in the sense that the only normal is the right."

"To me it *seemed* right."

"Right to do wrong? You admitted that it was wrong, didn't you?"

"Not all wrong."

"If it was wrong in any way—"

"We—we cared for each other. That in itself was a reason—"

"For betraying some one else?"

Once more the shrouded figure moved. "You're very severe."

"Is there any use in being gentle? If there is, tell me."

"You'd know that better if you knew what I've been through. It's what I hoped you'd let me speak to you about."

"Then I beg your pardon. May I ask you to go on?"

It was only after a silence that seemed long that she said, abruptly, "I never was happy—not till then."

As she was again silent: "Then? You mean when—"

"When—when it all came about. It took me—it took us—by surprise. We didn't mean anything—we didn't expect anything. It—it flared up."