

THE LIFTED VEIL

"That is, you thought they were good; but there was a flaw in the goodness somewhere. Don't you see, it all lies in what we mean by right—and by wrong?"

"Well, what do we mean?"

"What do you mean yourself?—let us say by wrong?"

"By wrong I suppose I mean a transgression of the moral law."

"Yes; and what makes one transgress it?"

She considered this at length. "I suppose some phase of desire."

"That's a very good answer. So that back of the actual transgression is thought. If wrong wasn't first in the mind it wouldn't be in the body—or on the lips—or in the hand—or anywhere. Good and evil express themselves in act; but in fact they are mental sympathies."

"So that what you mean by a good woman—?"

"Is one whose thoughts are kept as strictly as possible with good."

"On, but what kind of a woman would that be?"

Raising his head, he looked at her through the gathering darkness. "The fact that you can ask that—"

"Shows that when I thought I was a good woman I was really a bad one. Is that what you were going to say?"

"No; shows rather that you've never understood what a good woman really is. The whole thing is mental. It's a matter of understanding. If your mind had been right your heart wouldn't have gone wrong. It couldn't have happened."

"If you were a woman—" she began to protest.

"It doesn't matter whether I'm a woman or a man. In good there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female. It's not a question either of sex or of psychology."