

THE LIFTED VEIL

ing in a low and perfectly natural tone. She was the daughter of Charlie Endsleigh, a pioneer in developing the upper reaches of Fifth Avenue, from whom she had inherited her not inconsiderable fortune. As an Endsleigh she was related to the Colfaxes, the Jarrotts, and the Wrenns, which placed her in that circle in New York identified with religion, education, and philanthropy. The fact posed her solidly on ground on which she had authority. Authority was written on her face and figure, and translated in her manners and her tone of voice. She was invariably mentioned as a fine-looking woman, being tall and statuesque, with fairly good features and a slight inclination to be florid. Moreover, she was breezy, high-tempered, and imperious. She was outspoken, too, with the frankness of one who has a right to express her opinion.

Bainbridge listened with amusement as from the vantage-point of the sofa in the corner she denounced the company.

"In all my life I've never looked at such a crew. There are not more than six people whom I know—whom anybody knows—and the six are my own relations. Why, Mary Galloway should have got us here I can't imagine to save my soul. Why should any one be here? and why should a person like Miss Higgins want to give a party? Can't the good woman see that her very existence is matter of easy-going social tolerance, and keep herself to the background where she belongs?"

On a question or two from Bainbridge, who knew Miss Higgins only as a figure flitting in and out of St. Mary Magdalen's, especially at important weddings and funerals, Mrs. Palliser accounted for her hostess with some detail. The clergyman listened, for the reason that he