

THE LIFTED VEIL

or make me less grateful for the joy—I can use the word—it has brought me. If I have lost some things, I have gained too much not to be able to see that your friendship has made me rich with an inner treasure that time will not diminish.

I shall ask Mary for news of you. She will give you news of me.

I am keeping the ring—where I have always kept it.

“Have you heard from her?” he asked Mary Galloway, when he had brought her this message to transmit.

She nodded—chiefly because she found it hard to speak.

“And she’s—?”

“She’s better in health—and—and happy—except—except about you.”

He took one or two turns up and down the old rectory drawing-room before he was able to say, “Then tell her to be happy about me, too.” He stood before her now, looking down on her as she sat with eyes lowered and nervously clasped hands. “Tell her that—that if a veil has been lifted for her—one has been lifted for me also—one that was down—close down—and that I see—”

When he was long silent she gathered all her strength together to say, “See—what?”

“I see what I’ve written her, for one thing—and I see what she’s written me—be sure to tell her that!—and I also see—” his voice dropped, as he added: “but I’ll write that—or we’ll talk it over when I come back. Now—good-by.”

She barely lifted her brimming eyes, as without rising, and with her hand resting in his, she stammered the words, “Then you—you mean to write?”

“I will—if you’ll write to me.”

But as she made no answer to that proposal he stooped, kissed her cold hand, and turned away.