

THE LIFTED VEIL

"The question never rose. Before the year was past I began to have the same misgivings as he. It wasn't that I regretted anything. I'm not sure that I regret anything now. But—but I began again to see things as other people see them, and—and to be worried. From being worried I became unhappy, and from being unhappy—"

"You've become repentant. Is that it?"

"I don't know what repentance is. It's what I want you to tell me."

"Repentance is being sufficiently sorry for what one has done to give it up."

"If that's all it is, then—then I suppose I'm repentant. I've—we've—given it up."

"Since when?"

"More than six months ago. We meet—we have to—but—"

"Does that mean that you don't care about each other any more?"

Again he heard the hard-drawn breath. "I don't know what he feels for me. What I feel for him is chiefly—is chiefly pity. He's not happy; and yet he has to act as if he was."

"That is, he has to keep up the comedy of loving his wife when he doesn't."

"And never did. If you knew them you'd see how that could happen, and neither of them be to blame—or not much."

"Possibly; and yet we're less concerned with them than with you. Now that you've told me so much, may I ask you still another question? What is it exactly that you want me to explain?"

She considered this. The room was now so dim that