

## THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE

### V

ALISTAIR SEATON, belonging to an old Scotch family, had, on the death of his father, a soldier of moderate means, been left as a boy to the care of a Presbyterian mother; and he had, till he went to Oxford, received his education at home, being first committed to tutors who were preparing for the ministry of the Kirk, and then to an ex-professor of Transcendental Metaphysics from Glasgow, whose health had given way under the strain of regarding existence as a modification of the Ego or of the Absolute, or as the identity of what is and is not. The solemn demeanour of this genuinely devout sage, the earnest untidiness of his appearance, the spiritual light in his eyes, and the strength of his Scotch accent, seemed to Mrs. Seaton proofs of his old-fashioned Christian orthodoxy. Heresy, unbelief, and even doubt—enormities of which she had only heard—she associated with a jaunty air, an extravagant gaiety of apparel, the lightnings of an infernal wit, and a plurality of female intimates. She little suspected that the whole religion of the Creeds and the Bible had for her son's preceptor, who always wore woollen gloves, and who said "good-morning" as if it was part of the Shorter Catechism, hardly as much reality as it had for Voltaire or Gibbon. Still less did she suspect that her son, whose filial affection was constant, and whose expression in church was as admirable now as ever, had found in this preceptor's philosophy new eyes for his soul; and that