

THE LIFTED VEIL

that we've different conceptions of sin. You call yourself a sinner because you've done one kind of wrong thing, whereas to me you would have been a sinner whether you had done it or not."

"Yes, but only in the way in which every one else is a sinner—"

"The way in which every one else is a sinner is the way that counts. It isn't what we do that's so very important; it's our whole attitude of mind."

"That's something like what you said on Sunday; but I don't understand it. If what I do isn't important—"

"It is important—but less for itself than because it shows what lies behind it. It isn't the disease; it's the symptom."

"And you think that if there hadn't been one kind of symptom there would have been another."

"There are symptoms wherever there's disease. It's no use to consider the effect while we leave the cause undisturbed."

"In my case the cause was that I fell in love with a man I had no right to fall in love with, just as he had no right to fall in love with me. But, then, neither of us could help it."

Bainbridge smiled faintly. "You'll have to forgive me if I say that that, too, was an effect. The cause lay farther back."

From the way in which the veiled head was bent he gathered that she was trying to think this out. When she looked up it was to say: "Then I don't know what the cause is. I was all right before that."

"Were you? What do you mean by all right?"

"I hadn't done—I hadn't done anything wrong. I was what is called a good woman."