

THE LIFTED VEIL

"But no one wave is a creation by itself. Each springs from another—from a great many others—from myriads and myriads of others, back to the beginning of time. Its causes may be lost to such poor ken as ours in the infinity of the seas—and yet they're all there, definite, numbered, and recorded by the intelligence in which even a breaker can't form and dissolve unperceived."

Again Bainbridge made a sign that he followed comprehendingly.

The roll of the deep voice suggested a Buddha speaking from some age-long seat of meditation. "And yet you know that each of these waves, as your steamer rides it, brings you nearer to your object, nearer to your port. Very well, then! Just so with the phenomena of life. Nothing comes by itself—however isolated or disconnected it may seem. The causes are all there—ininitely far back. The thing that happens, no matter how you may question it or wonder at it, is the thing that was more or less bound to happen. It's the billow that rises for the minute. What's important is not to know whence it came, but how to rise on it. You can let it swamp your little craft—or you can make it one more bounding leap on the voyage which is to take you home."

Bainbridge said nothing, but he stood with bowed head and reflected. He knew it was in substance what he would have said to another man; and yet it was so hard for the physician to heal himself!

And because it was hard it was not till a fortnight later, on the eve of his sailing, that he was able to write:

You want me to tell you that I have not been made wholly unhappy in knowing you. Please be assured that knowing you has been the most precious experience of my life. Whatever happens, nothing can ever dim the wonder of the past few months