

THE LIFTED VEIL

the crisp autumn morning had given her a color for which no word in the language and no tint in the painter's palette was precisely adequate. She must now, he reckoned, be twenty-six, as she had been twenty-two the year of his coming to New York. In refinement she was a lady to the finger-tips, nor did she lack a demure prettiness, behind which there was a dash of fun. She had been abroad during most of his first two years at St. Mary Magdalen's, but he had remarked that since her return she had adopted, as far as he was concerned, a policy of keeping out of sight. That this withdrawal had anything to do with himself personally it had never occurred to him to think, nor did it so occur now. It only led him to say, after glancing at his engagement-book and promising to look in at Miss Higgins's, "Where have you been this long time and why does one never see you?"

Her answer was delivered with a scornful little smile and a toss of the head which might have been a mask for shyness rather than an expression of disdain. "That depends on whom you mean by one. Some people see me."

"I never do—or rarely."

"That's because you're not in the places where I am. But I assure you I don't become invisible."

"Then I shall count on you to look after me at Miss Higgins's this afternoon," he called after her, as she ran up the steps.

"Oh, poor Miss Higgins!" she threw over her shoulder. "If you'll only come I'll do anything."

And yet when he arrived at Miss Higgins's apartment, in a small residential hotel between Fifth and Sixth avenues, Mary Galloway didn't give him so much as a glance. Helping the hostess, serving tea, introducing