

THE LIFTED VEIL

into an upright chair that happened to be standing near the door.

He himself sat down again at his desk, waiting for her to state her errand.

"I heard your sermon last Sunday afternoon," she began, in the same low voice, in which he recognized the educated tone, "and it seemed to apply to me."

"Indeed?"

"That is," she corrected, "it applied to me in the sense that it has made me think of things, and I've thought that perhaps you could help me. I dare say you can't," she went on, rather hurriedly, "and that it may be foolish on my part to have come."

"Nothing is ever foolish that we do from a good motive," he encouraged. "In all action the motive is the main thing—even when we make mistakes."

"Unless I tell you the truth," she pursued, "you can't help me."

"Probably not; but I shall have to leave that with you. Tell me whatever you think it right to tell—and don't be afraid."

"I *am* afraid—but neither does that matter very much. I'm a woman who would be called"—she hesitated, but urged herself onward—"who would be called—a sinner. You know what that means, don't you?"

"I know what *you* mean—or I think I do. If I'm wrong you must correct me."

She seemed to reflect. "Why do you speak of what I mean?" she asked at last. "Shouldn't you mean it, too?"

Bainbridge was glad that he couldn't see her face, since he felt the more free to speak frankly. "If there's a difference between us it probably comes from the fact