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IN MEMORIAM.
PH. C. AND C. V. R.



CHAPTER I

‘AND so I suppose it is the correct thing to congratulate you,’ says Eve, ‘though I also may add that I am heartily glad not to be in your place.’

‘Why?’ says Jane.

‘The very word “marriage” makes me shudder. It has such a terrible finality. There seems nothing left to the imagination after it. It ends all romance, all possibilities. . . . Ugh! How glad I am not to be the bride! But, still, do take my congratulations from my heart, dear—if they make for your happiness.’

She is sitting on a low easy-chair near the fire, with her arms clasped tightly around her knees. Her supple body is bent forward, and there is a mixture of sincere terror and light mockery in her expression.

The girl opposite to her, who occupies the easy-chair on the other side of the fireplace, looks at her coldly, and smiles a sour smile of inveterate disapproval, almost as if against her will.

‘I certainly think it would be the correct thing to do,’ she says primly. Her nondescript features are rigid, and with upbent hands she is stroking the smooth silk bands of sandy hair drawn down from a straight parting.

‘But it is so funny,’ persists Eve. ‘I really can’t help finding it even a little ridiculous, though I ought