

## **THE STORY.**

### **BOOK THE FIRST.**

#### **CHAPTER I -THE CONFIDENCES.**

IN an upper room of one of the palatial houses which are situated on the north side of Hyde Park, two ladies sat at breakfast, and gossiped over their tea.

The elder of the two was Lady Loring--still in the prime of life; possessed of the golden hair and the clear blue eyes, the delicately-florid complexion, and the freely developed figure, which are among the favorite attractions popularly associated with the beauty of Englishwomen. Her younger companion was the unknown lady admired by Major Hynd on the sea passage from France to England. With hair and eyes of the darkest brown; with a pure pallor of complexion, only changing to a faint rose tint in moments of agitation; with a tall graceful figure, incompletely developed in substance and strength--she presented an almost complete contrast to Lady Loring. Two more opposite types of beauty it would have been hardly possible to place at the same table.

The servant brought in the letters of the morning. Lady Loring ran through her correspondence rapidly, pushed away the letters in a heap, and poured herself out a second cup of tea.