

CHAPTER I

WHAT HAPPENED !

It is very foolish to be gazing at the landscape when you are nearing the edge of a precipice.

ALL her life long Christian Fordham had expected something to happen.

Even when she was a mere mite of a child, with a curly head just level with the table, her baby precocity had astonished her mother. 'Me wonders,' she had remarked in her small chirping voice,—'me wonders what happenings baby's dot to-day.' Baby's 'happenings' became quite a household proverb at the Vicarage, hoarded up with other like sayings by fond and admiring parents.

Christian afterwards confessed to a friend that all through her youth and undeveloped girlhood she had never opened her eyes on a new day without a secret hope that something wonderful and unexpected might happen, and when evening closed in and everything had been as usual, she would whisper confidentially to her pillow : 'It has only been a stupid common sort of day, but to-morrow something may happen,' for she was a foolish, dreamy little soul, and being an only