

BOOK I

DISJECTA MEMBRA POETAE

CHAPTER I

HORACE JEWDWINE had made the most remarkable of his many remarkable discoveries. At least he thought he had. He could not be quite sure, which was his excuse for referring it to his cousin Lucia, whose instinct (he would not call it judgement) in these matters was infallible—strangely infallible for so young a girl. What, he wondered, would she say to Savage Keith Rickman?

On Saturday, when he first came down into Devonshire, he would have been glad to know. But to-day, which was a Tuesday, he was not interested in Rickman. To eat strawberries all morning; to lie out in the hammock all afternoon, under the beach-tree on the lawn of Court House; to let the peace of the old green garden sink into him; to look at Lucia and forget, utterly forget, about his work (the making of discoveries), that was what he wanted. But Lucia wanted to talk, and to talk about Rickman earnestly as if he were a burning question, when even lying in the hammock Jewdwine was so hot that it bothered him to talk at all.

He was beginning to be sorry that he had introduced him—the exciting topic, that is to say, not the man; for Rickman you could scarcely introduce, not at any rate to Lucia Harden.

“Well, Lucia?” He pronounced her name in the Italian manner, “Loo-chee-a,” with a languid stress on the vowels,