

MRS. BALFAME

CHAPTER I

MRS. BALFAME had made up her mind to commit murder.

As she stared down at the rapt faces of the fifty-odd members of the Friday Club, upturned to the distinguished speaker from New York, whom she, as President, had introduced in those few words she so well knew how to choose, it occurred to her with a faint shock that this momentous resolution had been growing in her essentially refined and amiable mind for months, possibly for years; for she was not an impetuous woman.

While smiling and applauding, patting her large strong hands, freshly gloved in virgin white, at precisely the right moment, as the sound and escharotic speaker laid down the Woman's Law, she permitted herself to wonder if the idea had not burrowed in her subconscious mind—that mental antiquity shop of which she had lately read so much, that she might expound it to the progressive ladies of the Friday Club—for at least half the twenty-two years of her married life.

It was only last night that awakening suddenly she had realised with no further skirmishes and retreats of