

# LOVE'S DIVINE ALCHEMY.

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## CHAPTER I.

“ Old friends to talk !—  
Ay, bring those chosen few,  
The wise, the courtly, and the true,  
So rarely found.”

—*Robert Messenger.*

THE long September day is gradually drawing to a close, as two travelers on horseback slowly wend their way along an unfrequented path, one of the many leading across lots from the main road, about seven miles from the city of Beaufort, in the State of North Carolina, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-two, before the pestilential breath of war has passed over this fair land. As they draw rein upon the brow of a hill along which runs a tall hedge completely barring their farther progress, we will take a good look at them, for truly they are goodly to look upon. The one, a gentleman in the prime of life, tall, and of rather slight build, with large dark eyes, deep set and earnest-looking, a gleam of white teeth beneath his heavy black moustache, with a world of pent-up energy in his every movement. He raises his hat to cool his brow which is white as snow, while his hair is already slightly sprinkled with gray. He looks as he is,