

Levity Hicks

CHAPTER I

SOCKITT'S

SOCKITT'S BOARDING ESTABLISHMENT lies on the north side of Gridley Square; and Gridley Square hangs, as it were, on the outskirts of Bloomsbury. Which is to say that it is not in Bloomsbury proper, although it aspires to be, and artfully hints at the fact in advertisements, and in other places. In the fanlight over every door in Gridley Square you will see a card announcing "Apartments"; and such population as drifts from time to time into Gridley Square is but a floating one—here to-day and gone on some coming to-morrow.

Gridley Square has a history. On the house at the corner, as you go out into that street which leads to a main and noisy thoroughfare, there is an unhealthy coloured lozenge set squarely between the windows, announcing that a certain man, whose name has been almost forgotten, once lived there, and giving the date of his birth, and that other date of his somewhat untimely death; and Gridley Square jerks a head in the direction of the lozenge, and pretends not to be proud about it. More than that, Gridley Square