

CHAPTER I.

I am an old bachelor, just past the half-century mark, staid and—shall I say it?—commonplace, no one would connect me with a romance; yet I had one in my day, not so thrilling perhaps as some we read of in story books, but it came nearly wrecking my life, and for a time made all the world bleak and dreary to me. Even now, with my fifty years tinging my hair with silver, the sight of that little green glove to-day, moved me more than I would have expected.

Two much-loved nieces take care of my house and look after their old uncle. My eldest brother died when little Elinor was a year old and her sister Barbara six; his wife lived only one year after her husband, and, as she had no relatives, the care of the two little orphans devolved upon me, the only survivor of our own family.

A settled and decided bachelor, even at the age of thirty-four, I took these little ones to my heart, and for sixteen years they have been the sunshine of my home. My stately Barbara, now twenty-three, is a perfect housekeeper, and my merry, light-hearted Elinor, the joy of my heart.

I am somewhat of a literateur, and while busy in my study this morning, I remembered a book that