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*I.—Spoof. A Thousand-Guinea  
Novel. New! Fascinating!  
Perplexing!*

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CHAPTER I

**R**EADERS are requested to note that this novel has taken our special prize of a cheque for a thousand guineas.

This alone guarantees for all intelligent readers a palpitating interest in every line of it. Among the thousands of MSS. which reached us—many of them coming in carts early in the morning, and moving in a dense phalanx, indistinguishable from the Covent Garden Market waggons; others pouring down our coal-chute during the working hours of the day; and others again being slipped surreptitiously into our letter-box by pale, timid girls, scarcely more than children, after night-fall (in fact many of them came in their night-gowns),—this manuscript alone was the sole