

**A MARRIAGE OF  
CONSCIENCE. A  
NOVEL; IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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A Marriage of Conscience. A Novel; In Three Volumes, Vol. I by Arthur Sketchley (George Rose)

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**ARTHUR SKETCHLEY (GEORGE ROSE)**

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A MARRIAGE OF CONSCIENCE,

# A MARRIAGE OF CONSCIENCE.

A Novel.

BY

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,

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AUTHOR OF "A MATCH IN THE DARK," "MRS. BROWN AT THE PLAY," ETC.

In Three Volumes.

VOL. I.



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# A MARRIAGE OF CONSCIENCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN a gloomy no-thoroughfare street—one of those described by house agents as situated in an aristocratic neighbourhood and near the parks—there stood Blomberg House, the town residence of the most noble the Marquis of Cankerfield: a gloomy mansion, which, built in the reign of the second George, in a then remote suburb, had enjoyed almost complete isolation for more than a century till the ruthless hand of progress, and consequent rush of cabs, omnibuses, and promiscuous vehicles, laid it open to the vulgar gaze, whilst traffic in general so invaded its precincts as to render it in the estimation of its noble owner simply uninhabit-



able. For some years previous to the irruption of the vandals above referred to, the house had been used only at intervals as a residence by the family, the members of which preferring to pass the greater part of their time in more agreeable localities possessed by the Marquis, who was the fortunate proprietor of several country seats, the finest of which—a palatial residence, surrounded by a magnificent park, in the midland counties—being what is termed a “show-place.” He had also a stronghold of the date of the last century in the Highlands, and a charming retreat amid the Surrey hills, where the second wife of the present noble owner and her family chiefly resided.

At the time our story opens, some forty years ago, two remarkable events occurred, almost simultaneously, in the Cankerfield family—the one being the death of Viscount Mildown, the eldest son of the Marquis, sole offspring of his first marriage; and the other the wedding of his second son, Lord Augustus Blomberg, who had gained the affections and handsome fortune of the daughter of

a millionaire. Lord Mildown died abroad, and so suddenly that his family had no intimation of his illness. The news of the melancholy event, which reached the family on the day after the wedding of his half-brother, did not, however, cast much gloom over its members. The Marquis, not having been on terms with his son, expressed no regret at his loss; and the Marchioness, although displaying the amount of regret which the decorum of life demanded, did not affect any deep sorrow at the death of a stepson. The departed nobleman had been estranged from his father from early childhood, for on the occasion of the second marriage of the Marquis, his widowed sister, Lady Caroline Dashwater, being childless, had volunteered to undertake the bringing up of the child, an arrangement which gave its stepmother much satisfaction, whilst Lady Caroline was most anxious to have the charge of her nephew. So it was that father and son, estranged from the first, became more so as years rolled on; a state of things which ended in an open rupture between them when the

young man, on attaining his majority, openly opposed the Marquis's proceedings as regarded the settlement of property, and went so far as to appeal, and successfully, to the law to restrain his father's action in the matter, a step which so deeply offended the defeated parent that he refused to see his son, though the young man had expressed a desire to be reconciled, as he was about to leave England for some years, chiefly in order to avoid the consequences of the quarrel with his father. The Marquis was, however, inexorable, and Lord Mildown went abroad unforgiven, never to return to his paternal abode.

A short time previous to his sudden death he was in town for something less than a week, but saw none of his relatives, his aunt being away from home; and as the object of his visit was to confirm the proceedings he had already taken, in opposition to his father's designs on the family property, he deemed it not to be a favourable opportunity to renew his overtures for a reconciliation. His sudden death gave the Marquis a