

**THE AMAZING
MARRIAGE. IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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The Amazing Marriage. In Two Volumes. Vol. I by George Meredith

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GEORGE MEREDITH

**THE AMAZING
MARRIAGE. IN TWO
VOLUMES. VOL. I**

THE AMAZING MARRIAGE

**THE AMAZING
MARRIAGE**

BY

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GEORGE MEREDITH

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL I

WESTMINSTER

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO.

1895

W. B. E. D.

TO MY FRIEND

FREDERICK JAMESON

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THE AMAZING MARRIAGE

CHAPTER I

ENTER DAME GOSSIP AS CHORUS

EVERYBODY has heard of the beautiful Countess of Cressett, who was one of the lights of this country at the time when crowned heads were running over Europe, crying out for charity's sake to be amused after their tiresome work of slaughter: and you know what a dread they have of moping. She was famous for her fun and high spirits besides her good looks, which you may judge of for yourself on a walk down most of our great noblemen's collections of pictures in England, where you will behold her as the goddess Diana fitting an arrow to a bow; and elsewhere an Amazon holding a spear; or a lady with dogs, in the costume of the day; and in one place she is a nymph, if not Diana herself, gazing at her naked feet before her attendants loosen her tunic for her to take the bath, and her hounds are pricking their ears, and you see antlers of a stag behind a block of stone. She was a wonderful swimmer, among other things, and one early morning, when she was a girl, she did really swim, they say, across the Shannon and back to win a bet for her brother Lord Levellier, the colonel of cavalry, who