And left alone, Valerie turned to the long thevel-glass, and stood before it, stretching her white arms above her head.

"Yes," she whispered, "I am beautiful?" She pushed her hand through the rick surls, golden in the light, dark where the chadley fell, and laughed a low, soft laugh.

"Why should beauty give me power? but it does—it does?"
She caused, and her case grow minifole.

It does—it does!"
She pansed, and her eyes grew wistful; a mist swept before them, blurring the dasking image in the mirror. She turned away slowly, and threw herself on acouch, hiding her face in the cushion.

"Once illy and rose in one," was ringing through her heart, music that banished the girlish thought of triumph and brought, back the noble nature to its purer self.

"I don't want power," she said, preusing her hands on her burning forchead, "I only want to see him again—more and more every day! What shall I dot I am always, always thinking!"

A sentle tap at the door. Valerie started, and sprang to her feet.

"Come in," she said, and Fanchon appeared.

peared.
"Oh! Fanchon?" said the girl, "you need not have staid up; I could have taken of

not have staid up; I combt have taken on these things myself."

"Mademoiselle is too kind. I am used to it." replied the Frenchwoman and then, while she removed robes and jewels, she poured out her admiration of mademoiselle, and her pleasure in mademoiselle's success. But Valerie gave no heed; the stream of fattery wearied her; and she was glad when Fanchon's duties were over, and she was come more alone.

when l'anchon's duties were over, and she was once more alone.

And at length she slept—a restless, fitful deep, troubled by confused dreams, in which, however, last night had no partibut it was the ball at Donnington, and though Max Reauregard was there, he would not speak to her, or look at her, turning from her in anger.

"What have I done? What have I done?" ahe cried, in anguish, in her dream; but he seemed to vanish away, and would not answer; and the dreamer woke herself with subbing, to find it broad daylight.

It was only a dream, then, after all! aht thank Heaven—only a dream. Her hand tiole to the little embrodered bag that lay on her breast, as if what it held were a falisman to save her from future evil; and with a long low sigh she whispered to herself, "Only a dream?"

herself, "Only a dream?"

CHAPTER XV.—HEAVY FETTERS.

The Court Circular—yes, here it was, a long list of the names at Mrs. Langley's dance on Wednesday night(a society paper speaking in glowing terms of the extraordinary beauty of Miss Valerie Herbert, and the sensation she created. Louis sat and read these things with a miserable feeling that Valerie was drifting away from him; she belonged to a world in which he had no part or lot; he was not "In her set;" she had passed at one bound from the valley to the Olymptan heights, and he was left below, looking up at her.

And yet before him ley a letter from Valerie asking him, in her annt's name, to some and dine in Upper Brook Street the following evening. Yes, he was asked now and then; he was not to see Valerie often; she was to be alienated from him; tanght the creed that money and rank are all in all. She was changed already; she was not as she med to be down at Welford; her letters failed to satisfy him, and she did not always answer promptly.

No wonder Louis felt chafed and heartscore; no wonder (especially as he was only just twenty-three) he talked and Monght.

The words and to dock he for the satisfy him, and she did not always answer promptly.

No wonder Louis felt chafed and heartscore; no wonder (especially as he was only just twenty-three) he talked and Monght.

and a minute later the door opened, and Valoric, in her moss-green relvet gown, came in, and ran up to the young man. "My men Valoric?" he said, taking her in his arms, and kissing her many times, "It is hard to see you so seldom."

Valoric drew herself gently from him. "We cannot help it, Louis, can we!" the said, foreing herself to speak brightly; "and we must make up our minds to a still longer separation."

longer separation."

Valerie! what do you mean!"

teaught her hand almost roughly in his pain

The girl turned white. Did he love her so much! and she-Heaven help her!-she

to that?" exclaimed the girl, lefore Louis could reply, the door open-and Mrs. Langley came in, to Valerie's lef, though scarcely to her lover's, fre. Langley greeted the young mandfully, the was too thoroughly well-de woman to ask a man to her home it then much him.

heritance for land-purchase.

"None the worse man for that, surely?" observed Louis, who inclined, out of the sheer paganoity of youth, to what he termed "liberal" views. "A man who carne land may be a better man than he who simply inherite it."

"You got those lines out of some malodrama, Louis," returned Valoric, onvalierly. "I can't discover what they mean; unless they mean that a tradesman is better than a gentleman."

"I don't quite agree with either of you," interposed Aire, Langley, "but you surely don't call an ironmaster a tradesman, Valerier"

"I wasn't speaking of Aston Lawford, aunt Constance. I meant that Louis' idea that man who makes money is a better man than one who inherits it—would, in fact, put even trade before land, wouldn't igp."

"I didn't mean it so," said Louis, vexed at being taken up in this style by Valerie; "but you have such invincible prejudices about land, Valerie!"

"These will become modified with time and experience," said Mrs. Langley, indulgently; "meanwhile, I may tell you that the Lawfords are received everywhere because, really, their connection with from is accidental. The Lawfords are a good family, and Aston Lawford's mother was a Vernon, of ——. Even the Beauregard's pardon the fron."

"Are they so very proud?" asked Louis.
"Intensely proud. I dare say Captain
fleauregard looks askance at the iron,"
added Mrs. Langley, laughing; "but then
military men are especially stiff on such
roints."

"And yet I dare say he would marry an ronman's daughter if she had plenty of noney," remarked Louis.

toney," remarked Louis.

Naterie did not for a minute think he would, but she said no more. She had an instinctive fear of being too warm in Max Beaurocard's defense.

Heauregard's defense.

A little before the time for Louis to take his departure Mrs. Langley contrived to leave the two young people together, for this was the last Louis would see of Valerie for several months.

For a few moments neither spoke; then Louis put his arm about the girl, and whispered;

"You will be true to me, Valerie, will you not, in spite of everything?"

"Ah! Louis—" the throbbing of her heart seemed to choke her.
He interposed quickly:

"Yes, yes. I know I ought not to doubt you. But there are so many things to take you from me?"

So many! Valerie pressed her hand to her forchead.

"You think" she faltered. "that wealth

brain. Had she ever loved Louist she been wrong from the beginnings unimpassioned affection she had for was that love! She put such ques-from her in a kind of terror; she would high terrors.

With a strange persistence in closing the loor of her inner consciousness she did not even look at a photograph which she

accompanied her.

Night and morning Valerie looked at that picture; but to-night she did not. She was lighting against the inevitable, trying instinctively to blind her eyes and deaden her senses. But when that struggle comes full knowledge follows swiftly. Even youth and inexperience cannot, in such a case as this, long juggle with conscience.



the attention she excited, said, archly:

"Mr. Lawford, you promised me you would do me a service—which I would not name then—when we left the box."

"Whatever the service is, I will do ft, attse Herbert," replied Aston Lawford.

"Then please try and get me a London vening paper. You will be able to find one surely in one of the hiosquee near here."

"Oh, yes. Is that the only service I can to you?"

"For the present, yes," returned Valerie, miling. "Stay, get me all the English rvening papers they have. Am I not greedy for year name?"

for war news?"

"You are a soldier's daughter. Besides, you know so many out there, don't you?"

"A good many. Now go, please, or you will miss the opening of the third act."

"That would not matter, if I were doing your bidding."

"Well, the papers might be gone, and that would be worse."

she slipped her hand from his arm, and Aston Lawford hurried away.

"What errand have you sent Mr. Lawford about, Valerief" asked her aunt.

"To get some evening papers," replied madenoiselle, playing with her fan.

Mrs. Langley smiled to herself. Aston Lawford, reputed millionaire, and certainly immensely rich, was clearly oprie with the portionless beauty; and she, whether she perceived this or not, made him do her bidding.

The party had returned to their loge, and the curtain had risen on the third act, when Lawford, with an Evening Standard, Globe, and an early Telegraph "special," came back.

"On, thanks!" she said, in an eager undertone; "that is a feast! I hope you had not to take much trouble?"
"If I had I would not grudge it," he answered, taking his place bostic her.
"You ought not!" retorted the girl, saucily. "Chut! We must not talk; but I must look at the telegrams."

"Let me!" said Lawford, taking the pa-pers from her and opening them at the

reserve that he at any rate, was safe, she gave her undivided attention to the operation where that bear fast as she looked at the Standard telegrams. There had been no fighting where Max Beauregard was, but some skirmishing elsewhere. The Telegraph and the Globe told the same tale, and she drew a silent breath of relief. She could put aside fuller reading for the present, until she was alone; and feeling secure that he, at any rate, was safe, she gave her undivided attention to the opera; while Lawford, who did not care much for any music, thought a great deal more about the beautiful girl at his side than about the sorrows of Margherita.

Mrs. Langley and her place were leaving.

Mrs. Langley and her niece were leaving. Paris for Rome the next day; and as the party drove back to the Louvre, where Mrs. Langley was staying, Lawford turned to the lady and said:

"I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing you off to-morrow?" "We shall be delighted!" replied Mrs.

Langley, Lawford glanced at Valerie, but Valerie was looking out of the window, and did not seem to hear question or answer. She heard both, however.

The carriage stopped, adienx were said, and Mr. Lawford and his sister departed, night" to the former.
"Is Mr. Lawford going to Rome?" she asked, when she and her aunt were seated

at supper.
"I don't know, my dear. But why do you ask in that tone—as if you didn't wish it?"

"Why not, Valerie? I thought you liked

him." A pretty shrug.

"He is plain and prosaic," she said.

"Nonsense, child! Do you want every-body to be like a hero of romance?"

Valerie thought of Max Beauregard, and suddenly laughed out.

"Mr. Lawford is far enough from that,"

"Ah! well, go to bed now, and wake up wiser," said her annt, lightly, and Valerie, nothing loath, obeyed; not because she was tired, but because she wanted to read her

tired, but because she wanted to read her precious newspaper.

"Give me a dressing-gown, Fanchon," she said, when the maid had removed her evening-dress, "and then you need not wait. I am not going to bed just yet."

Fanchon brought a dainty pink dressing-gown bedecked with lace; and thus attired, and with her pretty feet in embroidered slippers, Valerie seated herself on the lounge by the open stove and began to read the papers.

the papers.

Suddenly she clasped her hands together with almost a cry of joy, while the blood rushed over cheek and brow.

Captain Max Beauregard had been appointed to the colonelcy of the —th, vacant by the death of Colonel —, passing over the intermediate stage on account of his distinguished services.

Ah, how glad Valerie was! How her heart swelled within her! She read over and over through proud tears the words that seemed printed in gold! Then she laid the paper down, and sat gazing into the fire, slowly looking and unlocking her hands; then she turned to the other papers (she had been looking at the Standard), and found the news repeated in the Globe, Yes, there was no doubt about its truth. Why should there be? It was only Max Beauregard's due. How happy he would be to have won this distinction! How happy would be all those who loved him!

Presently the girl rose and went to her desk, and, opening it, unlocked an inner drawer, and drew out something wrapped carefully in tissue paper. As she did so, her fingers trembling, her check flushed, her bosom heaving, her eye fell on herown name and present address on a foreign onvelope lying in her desk. She paused abruptly; her whole face changing—blanching—a sudden horror in her eyes. That letter—received only yesterday from Louis—was like a silent witness, starting up before her to accuse her. She had fought down her conscience, and in a flash she

"I cannot marry him!" she whispered, pressing her hands on her burning temples. "I cannot, I cannot—it would kill me; it would be sin—treason! I never loved him! I was mad to promise him! but how should I know? I know what love is now—too late—too late! Oh, Heavens! he might have loved me if I had been free!" She fell on her face, weeping convulsive—ly. Poor throbbing, bleeding heart!—struggling alone in its mercy, what we

ly. Poor throbbing, bleeding heartistruggling alone in its mercy—what yet greater suffering had been spared her, if she had known one wise and loving friend to go to with her burden.

But there was none to counsel her, none to help her. Young, inexperienced, she must fight the battle unaided; she must learn the terrible woman-lesson of wearing a smiling lip with a breaking heart; but to snap the bands that bound her, how could she do it? How could she so wrong Louis? And yet it would be a greater wrong to become his wife w? In the did not love himstill more where revery thought was another man's.

CHAPTER XVII.—AT THE WELLESLEY, "'Miss Valerie Maude Herbert, by her ant, Mrs. Langley,'" read out the Hon. budley Fenton, from the Morning Post, ne morning in May.

He sat in a window of the very aristo-

He sat in a window of the very aristo-eratic Wellesley Club, much patronized by officers in crack regiments, but Where of-ficers in the "Trades Union," or any other condemned regiment, would inevitably fail to obtain admission.

A good number of men were lounging about the morning-room, several near the window. A young guardsman exclaimed: "Didn't she make a sensation—that's all! They say she'll marry a duke."

"They always do say that of a new beau-ty," remarked Mr. Fenton, in a tone that would have done credit to Chesterfield. "Is the duke named?"

"Maybe; but she's not sure of having the old lady's tin, and dukes look after the main chance in these days like the rest of "Likely as not, too," added another man, "she'll play fast and loose with all suitors till they get tired, and she'll have to marry

whoever she can get."

"Aston Lawford, for instance, worth a pot of money—but iron," said Dudley Fenton. "He was with them in Venice, you know, and I believe he is spoons on la belle

"Aston Lawford is a good match for any girl," said a marquis' eldest son, Lord Westbrook; "he belongs to the Nottingham Lawfords, a good old family."

"Ah, indeed, so I have heard I remember. Pity he took to iron!"

"Wish I had," laughed his lordship; and the Hon. Dudley twisted his mo superciliously, but secretly wished he had.
"Of course," observed an older man,
standing near, "Mrs. Langley means to arry the child off this season. 'Hands without hearts,' or, at any rate, hearts

"No," said Lord Westbrook, laughing,
"they have their innings afterward, eh?"
"Ay, that's it," returned the other, gravely; but I dare say the girl's willing enough to sell her beauty for horses, carriages, diamonds, position, and pin-money. They're brought up to it. "Thus runs the world away."

"You've seen Miss Herbert?" asked a

second guardsman.

"Last winter—before they went abroad. The loveliest creature I ever beheld and as fresh and innocent as a daisy. No doubt that is all gone by this time. The panther must have found out that she has clawa. You young fellows had best take care!"

He turned toward the door, while the young men laughed. They were all willing to take the risk. Just then a tall, rather handsome man, with brown hair and a thick brown beard-and moustache, came in, and someone said:

"There's Beauregard."

"There's Beauregard." "Beauregard!" exclaimed one of the men. "Any news of his brother, I won-

"Couldn't very well be," said Lord West-brook, who was in the Coldstreams; "why, Beau sailed with the troops on the —th of April. They ought to be home within ten days er a fortnight."
"Of course; I forgot. How do, Mr. Beau-

"So your brother's coming home at last, crowned by fresh bays and laurels!" said Lord Westbrook, with a mock theatrical air. "What chance have we stay-at-homes among the ladies against these fire-caters, fresh from 'deeds of derringdo,' and in some cases, notably in Beau's, good-looking into the bargain?"

Gerald Beauregard laughed.

Gerald Beauregard laughed.

"It doesn't concern me, you see," he said;

"for I'm out of it."

"Well-behaved man! Doesn't even labelle Herbert tempt you to firt."

"She would tempt an anchorite; but I should certainly get into Lawford's black books."

That intimacy, so easily formed between young people near each other in age and sympathetic in temperament, had sprung up between Amy—a girl of one or two and twenty—and Valerie, although the confidence was all on one side.

Valerie had the un-girl-like qualitations reserve. With all her out ivacity, she kept her inner life to he in the transfer of the reserve minimum life. knew nothing of the secret spring tend's character. She told her her than a man she had met, and danced with, and liked, as she might have liked

"What! going on the box-seat of La ford's drag!" Amy had exclaimed, wh informed of the fact; and Valerie's re-to the question somewhat staggered !

on Amy lau

"Oh, well," she said, "I suppose it's all right! Only you know what people will say! At the ball last night he was like

Valerie laughed out merrily; but there was a tone in the laugh Max Beauregard would scarcely have liked to hear—a touch of recklessness, a veiled sneer, to which the Valerie, of the Limes, was a total

"If I cast such a shadow as that," she said, "I must be under a spell of enchantment? Oh, yes," relapsing into a yawn, "what a bore he was!"
"Don't talk like that, Valerie. I do be-

Beve the man is fond of you."
"Don't abuse him behind his back because I am civil to his face!" returned Valerie. "Now, if I had said that you might have detected remains of Arcadian sim-plicity; but you ought to know better. Isn't it the correct thing to pull all your friends to pieces when they're not by? To flirt with men, and laugh at them in your sleeve all the time? Give me another cup of tea, Amy, and don't play Phyllis."

"You can't mean what you say," said
Amy, distressed, nevertheless, to hear her
young friend talk in such a strain. "You
could not lead a man on, to throw him
over in the end. Besides, you are still engaged to Mr. Charteris, are you not?"

A swift color crossed Valerie's cheek; the hand with which she took the cup from her friend trembled.

"Yes," she said, carolessly. "What then?" "Only he mightn's like your giving so much countenance to the rumors going about concerning you and Mr. Lawford."
"By going on the box-seat? But Louis isn't in town. I haven't seen him since hefore I went abroad. He is with his father, who is ill."

"He is sure to hear of it, Valerie, and might be in town before the meet: it isn't until Wednesday week."

Again the quick color in Valerie's cheek,
but this time it was no thought of Louis
that called it up, but another thought. He will be in London by then. He may

She said, slowly, after a par "I don't want to deceive Louis, Amy. I was jesting just now. I would tell him myself I was on Lawford's drag, or anything else I did. I can't let Louis or anyone else hamper me or dictate to me."

Amy looked steadily into the beautiful face, but Valerie shunned the gaze. She vas acting, if not actually speaking, falsehood; belying her noble nature to hide her secret; willfully misleading her friend into believing her ambitious and mercenary, that she might not imagine love for another man had cast out Louis from his lace in the heart of his betrothed—a place which, in truth, he had never occupied.

"I shouldn't have thought," said Amy, drily—she was straightforward and plain-spoken, and Valerie never resented this— 'that it was a matter of 'hampering' and

"I see. His slightest wish ought to be law, eh?" said Beauty, laughing.
"Wouldn't you feel like that for any man you loved, Valerie?"
"I might,"—dubiously—as if she could only conjecture, while her heart rose up with a wild throb of passionate pain.
Would not a look of Max Beauregard's be a law for her?
"You might!" echoed Amy—"you might!

"Oh, Amy," cried the other, puttting her "Oh, Amy," cried the other, puttting her pretty fingers in her ears in mock dismay, "pray, pray don't be moral, and high principled, and love-in-a-cottage—and all that sort of thing. I haven't heard such talk since I left the country—except from you. Your tea is getting cold, and so is mine."

"Your heart is getting cold!" cried Amy, warmly; "the world is spoiling you—no wonder! you are so beautiful, and so fussed about and run after. But you've got a heart, and a strong one, and you'll find it out some day; perhaps when it's too late."

"When I marry a man for his money, and fall in love with his most intimate friend. That's the rule," said Valerie flippantly.

pantly.

"You are determined not to be serious!"
exclaimed Amy. "But you'll repent it if
you marry Aston Lawford."

"Oh, my prophetic soul!" sighed Valerie,
leaning back in her old attitude again.
"Do you know," she went on, "that in
Paris they used to call us 'Beauty and the
Banat?"

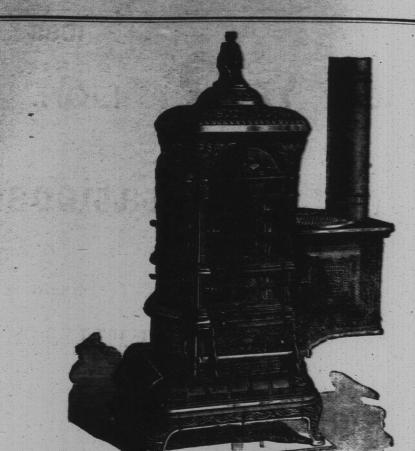
Amy could not help laughing at this, though she was pained to find how much a lew months of luxurious worldly life had changed Valerie for the worse. "The name was apt en ugh," she said.
"You can't like him, Valerie!"
"Like him! I told you he bored me."
"Then you oughtn't to dream of marryng him," said Amy, bluntly.

"I don't know that I have dreamt of it.
Why, I have hardly flapped my wings yet.
I am only eighteen. Fancy tying myself
up in such a hurry?" "You want to break a dozen hearts be-Amy, half lightly, half seriously.

"Aunt Constance doesn't think hearts necessary in marriage," said Valerie gravely.

"She puts her faith in settlements and

"And do you agree with her?" I haven't quite made up my mind. It very nice to have everything one wants,



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