night as she fell asleep, and in the morn-

asked Arol to go with her into Berring-

"I can't go to-day, Wolfe," she said,

why she wanted to go alone, and came

dear, and let Constance alone," she said,

"Oh, very well," he retorted. "Why

I'm too proud to force my society upon

the room to order his horse, he took her

"You are going to buy your dress,

"And may not I go with you?" asked

"Too proud to let your mother give

you a stupid dress for your dance, my

dear ?" asked the old lady, with a smile.

sure to buy me, they would say I was

"You are right, dear-you always are,"

said the old lady, lovingly. "You shall

go and buy what you like. But don't

was looking forward to the pleasure of

Constance drove the ponies into Ber-

rington, men raising or touching their

hats, and women bowing or courtesying

admiration for the beautiful young lady

whom the great marquis was going to

marry. There was a very decent linen-

draper's, and Constance, leaving Arol

in the phaeton, went in and asked to

see some evening-dress material. With

a respect that was almost reverential.

the shopkeeper produced his grandest

manners did not permit him to show,

she chose a nun's-veiling in plain white,

and at a cost of as many pence a yard

as the silks and satins were shillings.

She ordered this to be made up in a

simple fashion, and, at peace with her-

self and the world, got into the phae-

chioness asked her no questions as to

what she had bought; and as for the

marquis, with masculine ignorance of

the importance of the subject, he never

The night of the twentieth arrived.

stance. I suppose I must give you that,"

he said, as she went up to dress.

" Don't be more than two hours, Con-

But in less than an hour, as he was

sauntering up and down the hall in that

state of perfect contentment which sits

upon the heart of a man who is going

to dine well, and spend the evening with

the woman he loves both well and pas-

sionately, he heard her step upon the

He had never seen her in festal attire

She stood for a moment, her eyes

ing his eyes upon her. Then she looked

at him shyly under her long lashes, and

with the touch of coquetry which the

best of women possess hidden some-

And for answer, he still stood looking

"Great heaven!" he murmured, al-

and then at him with loving reproach.

look as if you would melt at a touch."

"So you like it?" said Constance, with

"Like it !" he returned, looking at her

Constance laughed at him, her whole

frame shaking with pure, honest plea-

caught the arm of the marchioness as

lady, placidly, but looking at Constance

with loving admiration. "My dear, it

is simply exquisite. Ah, you were right!"

"Why was she right? What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Never mind," she said, nodding with

a smile. "I suppose you are prouder than ever now—too proud to accept my poor little present," and she held out a

Constance took it from her and open

ed it. A suite of pearls in the plainest but most exquisite setting lay on the

serve it for this crowd to-night ?"

where about them, said:

Well, am I late ?"

a radiant angelic vision.

whispers.

stairs, and, looking round, started.

With the truest delicacy the mar-

ton and drove home.

gave it a thought

and most expensive silks and satins,

as she passed, but all with a smile of

you think it is rather hard for me? I

ashamed of my poverty, and that I had

'Yes, that is it, too proud," she said

dear ?" said the marchioness.

"Yes," replied Constance.

Constance shook her head.

"No, dear," she said, blushing.

the old lady, gently.

Constance nodded.

come in borrowed plumes.'

mind.'

"Go and see Goodman's barn, Wolfe,

wants to have rebuilt."

you ?" he said, cheerfully

what she meant to huv.

with a faint blush.

ness for a minute.

to her assistance

smiling.

and kiss her.



able. I hope I've done it fairly well, but if I haven't, I'll try to do so. Frankly, I'm very sorry that I didn't accept the inevitable at the start and make the best of it. I might have known that Welfe would fall in love with you, and, knowing it, have been perfectly convinced that he would have his way, if all the world said no."

Constance remained silent. She had taken up a piece of work and bent over it gravely.

'I suppose you are very happy?" said Lady Ruth after a pause, during which she had been watching Constance's face with keen scrutiny. Constance looked up for a second. Yes, I am very happy," she said,

thinking as she spoke that she would he still happier if Lady Ruth would get up and go down-stairs and leave her in peace. "Ah, yes, of course. It would be very

odd if you were not. Love is a strange thing: I don't profess to understand it. You see. I have never been in love myself." "No ?" said Constance.

"No. Because I have never met the right man, I suppose. My time will come some day, perhaps; meanwhilewell. I must amuse myself with looking on at the happiness of others. And he is very happy, too, I suppose?" Constance colored.

"I hope so," she replied. "Ah, yes; yes, he would be. That's quite natural. But take care, my dear Constance !"

Constance's fingers stopped, and she looked inquiringly at the sharp face. "Take care!" repeated Lady Ruth. "I know him better than you do, my dear, though I am not in love with him;

venture to utter a word of warning." Constance half rose. "Shall we go down to the marchio-

perhaps just because I am not, and I

Lady Ruth laughed. 'I beg your pardon, but that little air of quiet dignity becomes you so well! No, let us wait a minute or two till I've egot through,' as the Americans say, and don't be angry and impatient. I'm actuated by the most friendly feelings. I assure you. I really want your course of true love to run smoothly, and I think I can help it, if you'll be wise and listen

to me." "I will listen to you for hours-on any other topic, Lady Ruth," said Constance

She laughed. "Thanks; but this is the only one you and I can talk about," she said with covert insolence. "Just hear me out. and you will see how little cause you have for anger. I really mean well by you, and that's why I want to tll you to proceed with caution, my dear." 'With caution?" echoed Constance,

"Yes. I don't want you and Wolfe to quarrel, and I've always noticed that most lovers' quarrels are caused by their misunderstanding each other. I suppose, though, you think that you do | selfish and considerate of others. She understand Wolfe ?"

Constance made no reply. "I thought so. It would be odd if you didn't. But pardon me, my dear Constance, if I venture to doubt it. Why, just think how short a time you have known each other! A few weeks, so to speak. I suppose he has told you all his past history?" and she watched Constance through half-closed eyes.

"No? Well, perhaps he was wise not to do so. But you have told him all yours, my dear, of course ?" Constance fought to keep the color from rising to her face, and knew she had not succeeded by the smile that crept slowly into Lady Ruth's sharp

"Mutual trust? Well, that's very nice, but it's dangerous, my dear. Especially with such a jealous lover as

"Jealous?" said Constance, the word escaping her before she knew it. What! Not found that out yet?" exclaimed Lady Ruth; with a laugh. 'My dear girl, Wolfe is the most jealous of his sex. He is the kind of man who must not only wear the rose himself, but will not allow any other man near it; would lose his head, indeed, if he thought any one else had even touch-

ed it. Now, I've no doubt that there has been some one else-" Constance flushed, and rose from her seat, and Lady Ruth laughed.

'That blush betrays you, my dear! Why, of course! You are too good-look ing to have gone through the world without an affaire de coeur! Wolfe was not the first man to lose his heart, "Can we not talk of something else,

Lady Ruth ?" said Constance, coldly. "Bear with me a few minutes longer, my dear," she replied. "All I want to say is-don't tell Wolfe anything of those other little affairs. Take my advice and keep them to yourself. Once rouse his jealousy, and—" She shrugged her shoulders, "Let sleeping dogs lie,' is a very good maxim—especially for lovers. Now, I think you ought to be grateful to me, but I'm afraid you aren't. Never mind, I must console my-self with the reflection that I have done the friendly thing by you. You see, I know Wolfe so well." She paused a moment. "He is most charming while he has his own way, but once let his think that he is only playing second fid-dle "-she paused with her eyes on Constance's face—" and of course he must be only playing second fiddle, mustn't

stance looked down at her with If you mean that I have ever loved | very well .

her eyes flashing; but Lady Ruth held up her hand with a laugh. My dear child, don't overwhelm me I didn't say anything of the kind. Hew do I know? But I do know that he is not the first man who has fallen in love

Constance moved away. "I must go to Arol now," she said,

Lady Ruth got up from the lounge. "The dear child! Let me go with you! I should never have left him but for my father's illness. I hope you'll like my father, my dear, but I'm afraid you won't. You'll be very singular if you do. He is a martyr to the gout, poor man; and everybody belonging to him is a martyr to him. But he will be sure to like you; he always falls in love with pretty women-and generally tells them so the first time he sees them. You see, he has some of the Brakespeare glood in him. They are all alike !"

And with this amiable speech, she linked her arm in Constance's and laughed. Constance, feeling as if she would give anything to be able to draw her arm away, walked in this fashion

by her side to Arol's room. He was sitting by the window yawning over a book, which he promptly flung on to the bed as they appeared.

What a time you have been, Constance!" he exclaimed, throwing his arms round her neck. "I thought you were never coming. So you've come back, Cousin Ruth," he added, putting up his face to be kissed, but with no great eagerness.

"Yes, I've come back for an hour or two. I'm not going to stay, Arol. You den't want me now that you have got your 'dear Constance' back, do you ?" The boy blushed.

"I'm very glad you have come," he said. "Yes, I've got Constance. You know," with an air of the most profound satisfaction, "that she is going to stay, that she's never going to leave me any

"Yes; I've heard all about it, Arol," said Lady Ruth, smilingly, though her thin lips looked hard and strained. What a good thing it is! And now I really must go and see grandmamma. I shall see you before I go, Constance, Constance inclined her head, and La-

dy Ruth, with another peck at Arol's cheek, left the room. Arol was silent for a minute or two, evidently deep in thought; then he said,

slowly: "How fond Ruth seems to be of you, Constance, dear !"

"Yes," assented Constance, rather owkwardly. "What mistakes I do make," he said, she didn't like you, somehow. I don't

know why I fancied it, but I did." "Well, you mustn't fancy it any longer," said Constance, hurriedly. "Where is your book? Shall I read to you, dear ? And she caught up the book and be-

gan reading at once, to stop any further Lady Ruth went slowly down the stairs, smiling no longer, but with a look on her face which would have set Arol

pendering still more deeply. Once she paused, and looked round the grand old hall, at the tattered flags suspended from the oaken rafters, at the view of the park which she could see from the oriel-window, and her thin lips trembled as she muttered:

"She mistress here! Never!"

She went into the drawing-room and found the marchioness seated in her accustomed chair.

"Where have you been, Ruth?" asked the old lady as Lady Ruth seated herself beside her. "It was very good of you to come over." "Oh, I felt that I must come and pay

my respects to Wolfe's future wife as scen as possible; and I have been upstairs talking to her. I think Wolfe will have a very handsome wife." The marchioness looked slightly dispupointed.

'Yes. Constance is very beautiful.' she said, in her gentle way; "but she is more than that !" Lady Ruth looked at her with bland

'he is so good," exclaimed the old lady. "I never met any one with a sweeter nature than Constance's, so unhas nursed Arol as if he had been her own child, and there is not a person in the house who does not love and respect her. As for me-well, I feel that I have found a daughter in my old age."

Lady Ruth's face seemed to grow thinner and sharper, and her hands clasped each other tightly in her lap. "I admire her very much, of course," she said, quietly; "but I did not think ways looked good-tempered." She paused a moment. "By the way, who is

she, aunt-for I suppose she has told you all her history ?" And she shot a draw them in the papers. Her Grace of glance sideways at the marchioness. The old lady shook her head placidly. She is the daughter of a medical man who is dead, as no doubt you know.

Doctor Griffin knew him years ago, and speaks very highly of him indeed." 'Oh !" was the curt comment. "And

does he speak as highly of the daugh-"He knew little or nothing of Con-

stance," replied the marchioness. "Does any one know anything of her" asked Lady Ruth. "Of course," she added, sharply, "I am not curious on my own account, but one hates to be asked natural questions about Wolfe's future wife that one cannot answer, and people will ask me questions. It will be very embarrassing to have to reply- Really, I don't know anything about her, and neither does any one else.' That will be anything but satis-

factory." The marchioness looked at her with a faint trouble on her serene brow. "You have a strange way of putting things, Ruth," she said. "Any one can see that Constance is a lady, and that in sufficient. Why should people be so

curious about her ?" "I don't know why. I only know they will," retorted Lady Ruth, quietly. "If she were going to remain plain Miss Grahame, and Arol's governess, it would not matter who she was so long as she was respectable; but now she is going to be Wolfe's wife and the

"Well," said the old lady, after a pause, "to all those who ask you can say, as I should say, that Wolfe is satisfied; and, that being so, nothing else

if you think that will satisfy them you are very much mistaken, aunt; my fathink," she said. "I'll ask the ther, for instance, will want to know a great deal more, and will say some disagreeable things if I can't tell him."

The marchioness sighed gently. She

"Your father, my dear-" Then she ed. "Here is some fresh tea." "Yes I'll have a cup, and then I must go," said Lady Ruth. "No, I can't stop dinner; it will make me too late." The footman who brought in the tea

handed the marchioness a letter. "Read it, my dear," she said to Lady well-worn garment Ruth, who took it and opened it. Her face flushed, and her eyes gleaming she ordered the pony phaeton, and

'It is from the Duchess of Barminster," she said, shortly. "And what does the dear old duch-

ess say ?" asked the marquis, coming in at the moment. Lady Ruth ran her eyes over the letter, and handed it to him without a

word. He laughed. "Quite a characteristic letter, mother," he said. "The duchess, hearing of pur engagement, is going to give a ball-

a little dance she calls it ; I know what her 'little dances' mean !-- in our honor. You are to be sure and go, because st. wants to hear from your own lips what you think of your future daughter-inlaw. And there's an invitation for Ruth, too; she thinks she is still staying with us. Dear old lady. That's just like her. Anything is an excuse for a little dance. Constance will be delighted with her," he added, lover-like,

"It is to be noped the delight will be mutual," said Lady Ruth, smiling.

He looked down at her. "I can't imagine any one so dense as not to appreciate Constance," he re-

marked. "I'm afraid I shall not be able to go," she said. Then suddenly she looked up. "And yet I think I must. But I can go

from home if you will chaperon me in the room, aunt, dear; that is, if Constance doesn't mind sharing you." The marchioness smiled. " Of course you will go, Ruth," she said, quietly.

What is the date, Wolfe ?" "The twentieth." he said, dropping the letter in her lap. "It will be a big affair evidently, for there must be a gcod many London people staying at Barminster just now;" and he leaned against the mantel-shelf with his hands in his pockets and a faint smile on his

He was thinking that he had not yet in a low voice, putting her arm round danced with Constance, and that on the the marchioness's neck. " Don't you see, twentieth he should do so. dear ?" she murmured, falteringly. "If I were to go in the dress you would be

CHAPTER XX.

Not even the prospect of a dance at the Duchess of Barminster's could add to Constance's happiness, and she would willingly have forgone it; would gladly have exchanged it for, say, an evening stroll on the terrace with her lover by her side, her arm within his, listening to him as he talked, and watching making my poor little present? Never the smoke as it floated from the cigar gravely. "Now, I always fancied that | which, like a wise woman, she not only permitted him, but insisted upon his smoking.

There had come to Constance one of those epochs which the gods in their mercy sometimes vouchsafe to the sons and daughters of men-a period of perfect happiness-so perfect, that sometimes she seemed to wake with a start and ask herself what she had done to deserve such bliss, and whether it were not too perfect to last.

The marquis's love surrounded and hedged her about like a magic circle. but Constance would have none of them, which shut out everything that was evil and to the surprise of the shopkeeper or wearisome. Scarcely a day passed but he planned something for her delectation and amusement. He had bought a beautiful little turn-out with a pair of ponies for her, and with Arol she drove about the place in the lovely autumn weather, the marquis sometimes in the trap with them or riding the chestnut beside it. And if she was not driving her ponies she was riding the mare, which was now her very own, and of which she was as fond as one be comes of an animal which is part and parcel of one's love story.

Yes, she was perfectly happy, and her joy was intensified by the consciousness that it was shared by the man she loved. The marquis, who rode and drove beside the beautiful girl, his future wife, was indeed a very different man from the one who had returned home. fashion, on that sumprodigal mer night. There was no frown brow now, no sadness in his voice or eyes; and often and often the villagers who saw him pass their gates declared that he had grown like the bright, light-hearted youth they remembered years ago.

Constance could have done without before; and the vision of beauty in soft, the ball very well, and sighed out the white drapery, with a red flower in her dark hair, took his breath away. confession in her lover's ear, but he had aughingly assured her that there was downcast, a faint color in her face, feel-

'The dear old lady has got the affair up in your honor, my dearest, and go we must. I think you'll like her, Constance. She is about as unlike the popular idea of a duchess as can well be." "I always imagine a duchess as very she was such a paragon, though she al- fat, very haughty, and very much given to wearing a feather in her hair," said

up at her, as she stood in the soft light, Constance, smiling, "I know. That is the way the artists most inaudibly, "how beautiful you are, Barminster is just the opposite. She is Constance !" rather thin, the very embodiment of simplicity and good nature, quite un-

"What a word !" "Yes; and rather rollicking than therwise; and as to feathers, I don't think she ever wears them excepting when she goes to Court. By the way, dearest, she will be delighted to present

a shy smile, when they had reached the Constance gave a little start. Twenty security of the drawing-room. times a day she was reminded by some such chance word or incident of the wistfully, and seeming to drink in the greatness that had befallen her. loveliness of form and face. " My child,

"I don't know any one more popular do you know how beautiful you are? than the duchess," he said, "excepting Why, it is simply perfect! Why didn't you wear it before? Why did you reit is the duke. He is a very jolly old fellow. Goes in for farming and breeding shorthorns. He has over and over again been mistaken for his own bailiff, and once a stranger actually did offer him a sure at his admiration. sovereign for taking him to see a prize oull: it will give you a notion of his jollity when I tell you that he wasn't a

"This is quite a new idea of a duke," aid Constance, laughing. "Yes; it is one of the queerest sights in the world to see the pair of them going round the home farm; the duchess in a short skirt and thick boots, and the duke in a farmer's rough coat and thick

gaiters. They are as happy as the day

is long, as happy as we shall be when we are married, mademoiselle!" Constance nestled a little closer. future marchioness, the aspect is chang- go in for just the same kind of life. You "And I tell you what : I think I shall might ask the duchess where she buys her boots, and I'll order a suit like the duke's. Oh, yes, of course we must go. And do you know, I am looking forward to it? Of course, you'll dance every dance with me, Constance?"

She laughed and blushed. think," she said. "I'll ask the mar-chioness. It would be dreadful if I did

"But I say yes, yes, yes!" said the marquis, and he took them out of the case. "Do you think I dare venture to put them on, mother? Ah, you were in the secret, of course."

"No," replied the old lady; "but I ffair, Constance felt slightly anxious thought she would buy white. Yes, put them on for her, Wolfe." per black dress had done duty, and done Constance bent her head, and with it very well, for evening wear. But she could scarcely go to a ball at the Duchess of Barminster's in such a plain and every touch a caress, he put the neck-lace round her neck, fixed the ornament in her hair, and clasped the bracele ound her white wrist. Then he kissed She thought of it, woman-like, that

her, and stood back in the speechless delight of admiration and love. "It seems too good to be true, that this fairy-like creature belongs to me," he murmured.

What are you going into Berrington 'It is a shame to hide her in her cloak," said the marchioness, smiling, for ?" demanded the marquis. " I want-"but it has to be done. Come, Wolfe! ed you to go for a ride with me this morning. I thought we would go and if you stand star-gazing any longer you have a look at the barn old Goodman will be bewitched.

He wrapped her up as carefully as if a rough touch would spoll her, and they

He looked at her with a male obtuse-It would have been counted a long drive by ordinary mortals. Perhaps the Well, I suppose I can come with marchioness so considered it, but to the wo lovers it was all too short ; for while But that was just what Constance did the old lady dozed he could lean forward not want. She knew that if he were with and whisper his love to his darling, and her she could not buy what she wanted, could touch her hand, and now and aand she had quite made up her mind gain raise it to his lips.

They reached Barminster Towers at The marchioness guessed in a moment last, and for a moment or two Constance was rather dazzled by the lights and the stir and excitement. It was her first ball for many years, and she had never been to one of so grand a kind as this.

From an apparently endless line of didn't you say that you didn't want me ? windows the brilliant light streamed out upon the night : rows of handsome carany one," and as he sauntered out of riages stood waiting to put down the guests in the avenue, lighted by counthead in his hands and turned up her less colored lamps,

face that he might look into her eyes | Grooms and footmen in magnificient ducal livery moved to and fro, and strains of music floated out through the great doors thrown open wide. With a slight quiver that was neither all fear nor excitement, but a little of

both. Constance entered the vast hall, made brilliant by the throngs of beautiful women in ball-dresses A footman took her cloak and that of the marchioness, as well as the marquis's fur coat, and they entered the

A sudden stir, followed by a significant second or two of silence, announced their entrance, and Constance found herself stading before a tall aristocraticlooking lady, who held out her hand to the marchioness and then to Constance with a pleasant smile.

A little dazzled by the lights, Constance was rather pale than red when she entered, but the first words the duchess spoke brought the color back to her face.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear," she said with a nod that was more than friendly. "Wolfe, why do all the bad men get the most charming wives? Do you know ?" and she laughingly tapped him on the arm. "There, they are all dying to speak to her! Take her away now; but, mind, bring her back to me directly I have finished receiving. You may stay with me; will you, dear?" she added to the marchioness.

With an expression of almost boyish pride the marquis led Constance into the centre of the room, and there being no dance going on, they were surrounded almost instantly. The knowledge that the woman he had

chosen is universally admired does not tend to less on a man's love or self-sat faction, and Wolfe, Marquis of Brakespeare, could not fail to have that knowledge that night. Before half an hour had passed, the verdict upon Constance had been pronounced. She was not only beautiful,

but charming, and, if she wished or cared for it, there lay before her a social success which should be phenomenal in its completeness. Her card would have been filled up to the brim if she had not kept a dance or two open for her lover, and the crowd that gathered round her was so formid-

able that he was obliged for a time perforce to remain outside and look on at her triumph. Presently, however, he managed to approach her near enough to whisper: 'Is your head quite turned, you vain girl, or have you happened to remember

that I am to take you to the duchess ?" She looked up, radiant in her loveliness, and put her hand upon his arm. 'Well," he said, as they made their way round the crowded room to where the duchess sat amidst the dowagers. 'are you happy and enjoying your-

"Ah, Wolfe," she murmured, "you do not know how good and kind they all are! Happy? Yes!" He laughed, looking down at her

"Good and kind-you goose !" he retorted. "Don't you see that you have made a great hit, and that you are what is called a tremendous success!" He laughed again. "It is a good thing I am not jealous. By George! I knew I was going to marry a pretty woman, but I didn't think that she was going to bloom

into a society beauty. "Come and sit beside me, my dear,' said her grace, moving her skirts from a chair. "Lady Brakespeare has been Her face flamed, and she glanced at telling me all about you. I think Wolfe Mary, who stood behind her admiringly, is a very lucky man-I do indeed. Duke," and she turned to a stout, elder-"May I touch you?" he asked. "You ly gentleman who was standing near, surveying the brilliant crowd with an "I told you how beautiful it looked, amiable but rather absent-minded air, miss!" Mary ventured in the lowest of "here is a young lady I want to introduce you to."

The duke trotted forward and bowed. "Eh?" he said. "Who? Ah, yes; Wolfe Brakespeare's sweetheart. Yes, yes, of course. Hem! Very glad to see you, my dear Miss-Miss-'

"Grahame! Duke, you are getting deaf," said the duchess, patting him af-"No, I'm not," he said, shaking his

head; "it's the music in my ears. So you are Wolfe's sweetheart. Remember him when he used to ride over here and let my bulls loose. Dreadful young dog "Why, it only came home this after-Hope you'll reform him. Hem! Has he got any shorthorns this season? I don't think he'll beat mine. Best I ever had. "That's why you wanted to go to Berrington—and by yourself. I see," he I'll show 'em to you," he besaid. "Dearest, I don't know which I gan, eagerly; then his jolly, am suffering from most to-night, love or gcod-natured face fell. "Gad! beg your pardon; I forgot! Couldn't very well go tramping round the farm at this time of night, and in this get-up," and he glanced with comical rue-fulness from his own evening-dress to pride. Mother, look at her!" and he she entered: "isn't she lovely?"
"I always said so," retorted the old

> "Not very well, your grace," said Constance, her heart going out to the warm-hearted old man; "but perhaps you will show them to me some other time." "Of course I will!" he responded, heartily; "and I tell you what, my dear, there isn't a sight better month. there isn't a sight better worth seeing than a herd of really well-bred cattle; except, that is," he put in with perfect gravity and a bow, "a pretty young wo-

it was impossible to help smiling at this naive correction, and Constances face were a blush and smile at this

(To be Continued.)

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