

The Money Market.

CHAPTER I.

The Engagement.

THE curtain fell on the second act of *Tristan und Isolde*, and Lady Stoakley, who had been regarding the stage with a rigid and unmeaning eye, and sitting very upright, leaned back in her chair in the corner of the box, and, opening her fan, began to wave it to and fro, less with the object of cooling herself—for it was a June night with a temperature like that of midwinter in the polar regions—than of occupying her hands; indeed, she shivered as she fanned herself.

"I wish I had a million pounds," she said at length to her companion, in a rather fretful voice, like a child who is not allowed a particular toy.

Mrs. Montgomery did not cease examining the house through her opera glasses, but she sighed sympathetically.

"Yes, dear, we all wish that," she said, without putting down her glasses, "and if we had a million