

A Bracelet at Bruges.

ARNOLD BENNETT

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I.

THE bracelet had fallen into the canal.

And the fact that the canal was the most picturesque canal in the old Flemish city of Bruges, and that the ripples caused by the splash of the bracelet had disturbed reflections of wondrous belfries, towers, steeples, and other unique examples of Gothic architecture, did nothing whatever to assuage the sudden agony of that disappearance. For the bracelet had been given to Kitty Sartorius by her grateful and lordly manager, Lionel Belmont (U.S.A.), upon the completion of the unexampled run of "The Delmonico Doll," at the Regency Theatre, London. And its diamonds were worth five hundred pounds, to say nothing of the gold.

The beautiful Kitty, and her friend Eve Fincastle, the journalist, having exhausted Ostend, had duly arrived at Bruges in the course of their holiday tour. The question of Kitty's jewellery had arisen at the start. Kitty had insisted that she must travel with all her jewels, according to the custom of theatrical stars of great magnitude. Eve had equally insisted that Kitty must travel without jewels, and had exhorted her to remember the days of her simplicity. They compromised. Kitty was allowed to bring the bracelet, but nothing else gave the usual half-dozen rings. The ravishing creature could not have persuaded herself to leave the bracelet behind, because it was so recent a gift and still new and strange and heavenly to her. But, since prudence forbade even Kitty to let the trifle lie about in hotel bedrooms, she was obliged always to wear it. And she had been wearing it this bright afternoon in early October, when the girls, during a stroll, had met one of their new friends, Madame Lawrence, on the world-famous Quai du Rosaire, just at the back of the Hotel de Ville and the Halles.

Madame Lawrence resided permanently in Bruges. She was between twenty-five and forty-five, dark, with the air of continually subduing a natural instinct to dash, and well dressed in black. Equally interested in the peerage and in the poor, she had made the acquaintance of Eve and Kitty at the Hôtel de la Grande Place, where she called from time to time to induce English travellers to buy genuine Bruges lace, wrought under her own supervision by her own paupers. She was Belgian by birth, and when complimented on her fluent and correct English, she gave all the praise to her deceased husband, an English barrister. She had settled in Bruges like many people settle there, because Bruges is inexpensive, picturesque, and inordinately respectable. Besides an English church and chaplain, it has two cathedrals and an episcopal palace, with a real bishop in it.

"What an exquisite bracelet! May I look at it?" It was these simple but ecstatic words, spoken with Madame Lawrence charming foreign accent, which had begun the tragedy. The three women had stopped to admire the

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always admirable view from the little quay, and they were leaning over the rails when Kitty unclasped the bracelet for the inspection of the widow. The next instant there was a plop, an affrighted exclamation from Madame Lawrence in her native tongue, and the bracelet was engulfed before the very eyes of all three.

The three looked at each other non-plussed. Then they looked around, but not a single person was in sight. Then, for some reason which, doubtless, psychology can explain, they stared hard at the water, though the water there was just as black and foul as it is everywhere else in the canal system of Bruges.

"Surely you've not dropped it!" Eve Fincastle exclaimed in a voice of horror. Yet she knew positively that Madame Lawrence had.

The delinquent took a handkerchief from her muff and sobbed into it. And between her sobs she murmured: "We must inform the police."

"Yes, of course," said Kitty, with the lightness of one to whom a five-hundred-pound bracelet is a bagatelle. "They'll fish it up in no time."

"Well," Eve decided, "you go to the police at once, Kitty; and Madame Lawrence will go with you, because she speaks French, and I'll stay here to mark the exact spot."

The other two started, but Madame Lawrence, after a few steps, put her hand to her side. "I can't," she sighed, pale. "I am too upset. I cannot walk. You go with Miss Sartorius," she said to Eve, "and I will stay," and she leaned heavily against the railings.

Eve and Kitty ran off, just as if it was an affair of seconds, and the bracelet had to be saved from drowning. But they had scarcely turned the corner, thirty yards away, when they reappeared in company with a high official of police, whom, by the most lucky chance in the world, they had encountered in the covered passage leading to the Place du Bourg. This official, instantly enslaved by Kitty's beauty, proved to be the very mirror of politeness and optimism. He took their names and addresses, and a full description of the bracelet, and informed them that at that place the canal was nine feet deep. He said that the bracelet should undoubtedly be recovered on the morrow, but that, as dusk was imminent, it would be futile to commence angling that night. In the meantime the loss should be kept secret; and to make all sure, a succession of gendarmes should guard the spot during the night.

Kitty grew radiant, and rewarded the gallant officer with smiles; Eve was satisfied, and the face of Madame Lawrence wore a less mournful hue.

"And now," said Kitty to Madame, when everything had been arranged, and the first of the gendarmes was duly installed at the exact spot against the railings, "you must come and take tea with us in our winter garden; and be gay! Smile! I insist. And I insist that you don't worry."

Madame Lawrence tried feebly to smile.

"You are very good-natured," she stammered.

Which was decidedly true.

II.

The winter-garden of the Hôtel de la Grande Place, referred to in all the hotel's advertisements, was merely the inner court of the hotel, roofed in by glass at the height of the first storey. Cane flourished there, in the shape of

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lounge-chairs, but no other plant. One of the lounge chairs was occupied when, just as the carillon in the belfry at the other end of the Place began to play Gounod's "Nazareth," indicating the hour of five o'clock, the three ladies entered the winter-garden. Apparently the toilettes of two of them had been adjusted and embellished as for a somewhat ceremonious occasion.

"Lo!" cried Kitty Sartorius, when she perceived the occupant of the chair, "the millionaire! Mr. Thorold, how charming of you to reappear like this! I invite you to tea."

Cecil Thorold rose with appropriate eagerness.

"Delighted!" he said, smiling, and then explained that he had arrived from Ostend about two hours before and had taken rooms in the hotel.

"You knew we were staying here?" Eve asked as he shook hands with her.

"No," he replied; "but I am very glad to find you again."

"Are you?" She spoke languidly, but her colour heightened and those eyes of hers sparkled.

"Madame Lawrence," Kitty chirruped, "let me present Mr. Cecil Thorold. He is appallingly rich, but we mustn't let that frighten us."

From a mouth less adorable than the mouth of Miss Sartorius such an introduction might have been judged lacking in the elements of good form, but for more than two years now Kitty had known that whatever she did or said was perfectly correct because she did or said it. The new acquaintances laughed amiably and a certain intimacy was at once established.

"Shall I order tea, dear?" Eve suggested.

"No, dear," said Kitty quietly. "We will wait for the Count."

"The Count?" demanded Cecil Thorold.

"The Comte d'Avrec," Kitty explained. "He is staying here."

"A French nobleman, doubtless?"

"Yes," said Kitty; and she added, "you will like him. He is an archæologist, and a musician oh, and lots of things!"

"If I am one minute late, I entreat pardon," said a fine tenor voice at the door.

It was the Count. After he had been introduced to Madame Lawrence, and Cecil Thorold had been introduced to him, tea was served.

Now, the Comte d'Avrec was everything that a French count ought to be. As dark as Cecil Thorold, and even handsomer, he was a little older and a little taller than the millionaire, and a short, pointed, black beard, exquisitely trimmed, gave him an appearance of staid reliability which Cecil lacked. His bow was a vertebrate poem, his smile a consolation for all misfortunes, and he managed his hat, stick, gloves, and cup with the dazzling assurance of a conjurer. To observe him at afternoon tea was to be convinced that he had been specially created to shine gloriously in drawing-rooms, winter-gardens, and tables d'hôte. He was one of those men who always do

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the right thing at the right moment, who are capable of speaking an indefinite number of languages with absolute purity of accent (he spoke English much better than Madame Lawrence), and who can and do discourse with verve and accuracy on all sciences, arts, sports, and religions. In short, he was a phoenix of a count; and this was certainly the opinion of Miss Kitty Sartorius and of Miss Eve Fincastle, both of whom reckoned that what they did not know about men might be ignored. Kitty and the Count, it soon became evident, were mutually attracted; their souls were approaching each other with a velocity which increased inversely as the square of the lessening distance between them. And Eve was watching this approximation with undisguised interest and relish.

Nothing of the least importance occurred, save the Count's marvellous exhibition of how to behave at afternoon tea, until the refection was nearly over; and then, during a brief pause in the talk, Cecil, who was sitting to the left of Madame Lawrence, looked sharply round at the right shoulder of his tweed coat; he repeated the gesture a second and yet a third time.

"What is the matter with the man?" asked Eve Fincastle. Both she and Kitty were extremely bright, animated, and even excited.

"Nothing. I thought I saw something on my shoulder, that's all," said Cecil. "Ah! It's only a bit of thread." And he picked off the thread with his left hand and held it before Madame Lawrence. "See! It's a piece of thin black silk, knotted. At first I took it for an insect—you know how queer things look out of the corner of your eye. Pardon!" He had dropped the fragment on to Madame Lawrence's black silk dress. "Now it's lost."

"If you will excuse me, kind friends," said Madame Lawrence, "I will go." She spoke hurriedly, and as though in mental distress.

"Poor thing!" Kitty Sartorius exclaimed when the widow had gone. "She's still dreadfully upset"; and Kitty and Eve proceeded jointly to relate the story of the diamond bracelet, upon which hitherto they had kept silence (though with difficulty), out of regard for Madame Lawrence's feelings.

Cecil made almost no comment.

The Count, with the sympathetic excitability of his race, walked up and down the winter-garden, asseverating earnestly that such clumsiness amounted to a crime; then he grew calm and confessed that he shared the optimism of the police as to the recovery of the bracelet; lastly he complimented Kitty on her equable demeanour under this affliction.

"Do you know, Count," said Cecil Thorold, later, after they had all four ascended to the drawing-room overlooking the Grande Place, "I was quite surprised when I saw at tea that you had to be introduced to Madame Lawrence."

"Why so, my dear Mr. Thorold?" the Count inquired suavely.

"I thought I had seen you together in Ostend a few days ago."

The Count shook his wonderful head.

"Perhaps you have a brother?" Cecil paused.

"No," said the Count. "But it is a favourite theory of mine that everyone has his double somewhere in the world." Previously the Count had been discussing Planchette—he was a great authority on the supernatural, the sub-conscious, and the subliminal. He now deviated gracefully to the discussion of the theory of doubles.

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"I suppose you aren't going out for a walk, dear, before dinner?" said Eve to Kitty.

"No, dear," said Kitty, positively.

"I think I shall," said Eve.

And her glance at Cecil Thorold intimated in the plainest possible manner that she wished not only to have a companion for a stroll, but to leave Kitty and the Count in dual solitude.

"I shouldn't, if I were you, Miss Fincastle," Cecil remarked, with calm and studied blindness. "It's risky here in the evenings with these canals exhaling miasma and mosquitoes and bracelets and all sorts of things."

"I will take the risk, thank you," said Eve, in an icy tone, and she haughtily departed; she would not cower before Cecil's millions. As for Cecil, he joined in the discussion of the theory of doubles.

III.

On the next afternoon but one, policemen were still fishing, without success, for the bracelet, and raising from the ancient duct long-buried odours which threatened to destroy the inhabitants of the quay. (When Kitty Sartorius had hinted that perhaps the authorities might see their way to drawing off the water from the canal, the authorities had intimated that the death-rate of Bruges was already as high as convenient.) Nevertheless, though nothing had happened, the situation had somehow developed, and in such a manner that the bracelet itself was in danger of being partially forgotten; and of all places in Bruges, the situation had developed on the top of the renowned Belfry which dominates the Grande Place in particular and the city in general.

The summit of the Belfry is three hundred and fifty feet high, and it is reached by four hundred and two winding stone steps, each a separate menace to life and limb. Eve Fincastle had climbed those steps alone, perhaps in quest of the view at the top, perhaps in quest of spiritual calm. She had not been leaning over the parapet more than a minute before Cecil Thorold had appeared, his field-glasses slung over his shoulder. They had begun to talk a little, but nervously and only in snatches. The wind blew free up there among the forty-eight bells, but the social atmosphere was oppressive.

"The Count is a most charming man," Eve was saying, as if in defence of the Count.

"He is," said Cecil; "I agree with you."

"Oh, no, you don't, Mr. Thorold! Oh, no, you don't!"

Then there was a pause, and the twain looked down upon Bruges, with its venerable streets, its grass-grown squares, its waterways, and its innumerable monuments, spread out maplike beneath them in the mellow October sunshine. Citizens passed along the thoroughfare in the semblance of tiny dwarfs.

"If you didn't hate him," said Eve, "you wouldn't behave as you do."

"How do I behave, then?"

Eve schooled her voice to an imitation of jocularly

"All Tuesday evening, and all day yesterday, you couldn't leave them alone. You know you couldn't."

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Five minutes later the conversation had shifted.

"You actually saw the bracelet fall into the canal?" said Cecil.

"I actually saw the bracelet fall into the canal. And no one could have got it out while Kitty and I were away, because we weren't away half a minute."

But they could not dismiss the subject of the Count, and presently he was again the topic.

"Naturally it would be a good match for the Count for any man," said Eve; "but then it would also be a good match for Kitty. Of course, he is not so rich as some people, but he is rich."

Cecil examined the horizon with his glasses, and then the streets near the Grand Place.

"Rich, is he? I'm glad of it. By the by, he's gone to Ghent for the day, hasn't he?"

"Yes, he went by the 9.27, and returns by the 4.38."

Another pause.

"Well," said Cecil at length, handing the glasses to Eve Fincastle, "kindly glance down there. Follow the line of the Rue St. Nicolas. You see the cream-coloured house with the enclosed courtyard? Now, do you see two figures standing together near a door—a man and a woman, the woman on the steps? Who are they?"

"I can't see very well," said Eve.

"Oh, yes, my dear lady, you can," said Cecil. "These glasses are the very best. Try again."

"They look like the Comte d'Avrec and Madame Lawrence," Eve murmured.

"But the Count is on his way from Ghent! I see the steam of the 4.38 over there. The curious thing is that the Count entered the house of Madame Lawrence, to whom he was introduced for the first time the day before yesterday, at ten o'clock this morning. Yes, it would be a very good match for the Count. When one comes to think of it, it usually is that sort of man that contrives to marry a brilliant and successful actress. There! He's just leaving, isn't he? Now let us descend and listen to the recital of his day's doings in Ghent—shall we?"

"You mean to insinuate," Eve burst out in sudden wrath, "that the Count is an—an adventurer, and that Madame Lawrence—Oh! Mr. Thorold!" She laughed condescendingly. "This jealousy is too absurd. Do you suppose I haven't noticed how impressed you were with Kitty at the Devonshire Mansion that night, and again at Ostend, and again here? You're simply carried away by jealousy; and you think because you are a millionaire you must have all you want. I haven't the slightest doubt that the Count—"

"Anyhow," said Cecil, "let us go down and hear about Ghent."

His eyes made a number of remarks (indulgent, angry, amused, protective, admiring, perspicacious, puzzled), too subtle for the medium of words.

They groped their way down to earth in silence, and it was in silence that they crossed the Grande Place. The Count was seated on the terrasse in front of the hotel, with a liqueur glass before him, and he was making graceful and expressive signs to Kitty Sartorius, who leaned her marvellous beauty out of a first-storey window. He greeted Cecil Thorold and Eve with an equal grace.

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"And how is Ghent?" Cecil inquired.

"Did you go to Ghent, after all, Count?" Eve put in. The Comte d'Avrec looked from one to another, and then, instead of replying, he sipped at his glass. "No," he said, "I didn't go. The rather curious fact is that I happened to meet Madame Lawrence, who offered to show me her collection of lace. I have been an amateur of lace for some years, and really Madame Lawrence's collection is amazing. You have seen it? No? You should do so. I'm afraid I have spent most of the day there."

When the Count had gone to join Kitty in the drawing-room, Eve Fincastle looked victoriously at Cecil, as if to demand of him: "Will you apologise?"

"My dear journalist," Cecil remarked simply, "you gave the show away."

* * * * * That evening the continued obstinacy of the bracelet, which still refused to be caught, began at last to disturb the birdlike mind of Kitty Sartorius. Moreover, the secret was out, and the whole town of Bruges was discussing the episode and the chances of success.

"Let us consult Planchette," said the Count. The proposal was received with enthusiasm by Kitty. Eve had disappeared.

Planchette was produced; and when asked if the bracelet would be recovered, it wrote, under the hands of Kitty and the Count, a trembling "Yes." When asked: "By whom?" it wrote a word which faintly resembled "Avrec."

The Count stated that he should personally commence dragging operations at sunrise. "You will see," he said, "I shall succeed."

"Let me try this toy, may I?" Cecil asked blandly, and, upon Kitty agreeing, he addressed Planchette in a clear voice: "Now, Planchette, who will restore the bracelet to its owner?"

And Planchette wrote "Thorold," but in characters as firm and regular as those of a copy-book.

"Mr. Thorold is laughing at us," observed the Count, imperturbably bland.

"How horrid you are, Mr. Thorold!" Kitty exclaimed.

IV.

Of the four persons more or less interested in the affair, three were secretly active that night, in and out of the hotel. Only Kitty Sartorius, chief mourner for the bracelet, slept placidly in her bed. It was towards three o'clock in the morning that a sort of preliminary crisis was reached.

From the multiplicity of doors which ventilate its rooms, one would imagine that the average foreign hotel must have been designed immediately after its architect had been to see a Palais Royal farce, in which every room opens into every other room in every act. The Hôtel de la Grande Place was not peculiar in this respect; it abounded in doors. All the chambers on the second storey, over the public rooms, fronting the Place, communicated one with the next, but naturally most of the communicating doors were locked. Cecil Thorold and the Comte d'Avrec had each a bedroom and a sitting-room on that floor. The Count's sitting-room adjoined Cecil's; and the door between was locked, and the key in the possession of the landlord.

Nevertheless, at three a.m. this particular door opened noiselessly from Cecil's side, and Cecil entered the domain

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of the Count. The moon shone, and Cecil could plainly see not only the silhouette of the Belfry across the Place, but also the principal objects within the room. He noticed the table in the middle, the large easy-chair turned towards the hearth, the old-fashioned sofa; but not a single article did he perceive which might have been the personal property of the Count. He cautiously passed across the room through the moonlight to the door of the Count's bedroom, which apparently, to his immense surprise, was not only shut, but locked, and the key in the lock on the sitting-room side. Silently unlocking it, he entered the bedroom and disappeared

In less than five minutes he crept back into the Count's sitting-room, closed the door and locked it.

"Odd!" he murmured reflectively; but he seemed quite happy.

There was a sudden movement in the region of the hearth, and a form rose from the armchair. Cecil rushed to the switch and turned on the electric light. Eve Fincastle stood before him. They faced each other.

"What are you doing here at this time, Miss Fincastle?" he asked, sternly. "You can talk freely; the Count will not waken."

"I may ask you the same question," Eve replied, with cold bitterness.

"Excuse me. You may not. You are a woman. This is the Count's room "

"You are in error," she interrupted him. "It is not the Count's room. It is mine. Last night I told the Count I had some important writing to do, and I asked him as a favour to relinquish this room to me for twenty-four hours. He very kindly consented. He removed his belongings, handed me the key of that door, and the transfer was made in the hotel books. And now," she added, "may I inquire, Mr. Thorold, what you are doing in my room?"

"I I thought it was the Count's," Cecil faltered decidedly at a loss for a moment. "In offering my humblest apologies, permit me to say that I admire you, Miss Fincastle."

"I wish I could return the compliment," Eve exclaimed, and she repeated with almost plaintive sincerity: "I do wish I could."

Cecil raised his arms and let them fall to his side.

"You meant to catch me," he said. "You suspected something, then? The 'important writing' was an invention." And he added, with a faint smile: "You really ought not to have fallen asleep. Suppose I had not wakened you?"

"Please don't laugh, Mr. Thorold. Yes, I did suspect. There was something in the demeanour of your servant Lecky that gave me the idea. . . . I did mean to catch you. Why you, a millionaire, should be a burglar, I cannot understand. I never understood that incident at the Devonshire Mansion; it was beyond me. I am by no means sure that you didn't have a great deal to do with the Rainshore affair at Ostend. But that you should have stooped to slander is the worst. I confess you are a mystery. I confess that I can make no guess at the nature of your present scheme. And what I shall do, now that I have caught you, I don't know. I can't decide; I must think. If, however, anything is missing to-morrow morning, I shall be bound in any case to denounce you. You grasp that?"

"I grasp it perfectly, my dear journalist," Cecil replied. "And something will not improbably be missing. But take the advice of a burglar and a mystery, and go to bed, it is half past three."

And Eve went. And Cecil bowed her out and then retired to his own rooms. And the Count's apartment was left to the moonlight.

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V.

"Planchette is a very safe prophet," said Cecil to Kitty Sartorius the next morning, "provided it has firm guidance."

They were at breakfast.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Planchette prophesied last night that I should restore to you your bracelet. I do."

He took the lovely gewgaw from his pocket and handed it to Kitty.

"Ho—ow did you find it, you dear thing?" Kitty stammered, trembling under the shock of joy.

"I fished it up out out of the mire by a contrivance of my own."

"But when?"

"Oh! Very early. At three o'clock a.m. You see, I was determined to be first."

"In the dark, then?"

"I had a light. Don't you think I'm rather clever?"

Kitty's scene of ecstatic gratitude does not come into the story. Suffice it to say that not until the moment of its restoration did she realise how precious the bracelet was to her.

It was ten o'clock before Eve descended. She had breakfasted in her room, and Kitty had already exhibited to her the prodigal bracelet.

"I particularly want you to go up the Belfry with me, Miss Fincastle," Cecil greeted her; and his tone was so serious and so urgent that she consented. They left Kitty playing waltzes on the piano in the drawing—room.

"And now, O man of mystery?" Eve questioned, when they had toiled to the summit, and saw the city and its dwarfs beneath them.

"We are in no danger of being disturbed here," Cecil began; "but I will make my explanation the explanation which I certainly owe you as brief as possible. Your Comte d'Avrec is an adventurer (please don't be angry), and your Madame Lawrence is an adventuress. I knew that I had seen them together. They work in concert; and for the most part make a living on the gaming—tables of Europe. Madame Lawrence was expelled from Monte Carlo last year for being too intimate with a croupier. You may be aware that at a roulette—table one can do a great deal with the aid of the croupier. Madame Lawrence appropriated the bracelet 'on her own,' as it were. The Count (he may be a real Count, for anything I know) heard first of that enterprise from the lips of Miss Sartorius. He was annoyed, angry because he was really a little in love with your friend, and he saw golden prospects. It is just this fact the Count's genuine passion for Miss Sartorius that renders the case psychologically interesting. To proceed, Madame Lawrence became jealous. The Count spent six hours yesterday in trying to get the bracelet from her, and failed. He tried again last night, and succeeded, but not too easily, for he did not re—enter the hotel till after one o'clock. At first I thought he had succeeded in the daytime, and I had arranged accordingly, for I did not see why he should have the honour and glory of restoring the bracelet to its owner. Lecky and I fixed up a

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sleeping—draught for him. The minor details were simple. When you caught me this morning, the bracelet was in my pocket, and in its stead I had left a brief note for the perusal of the Count, which has had the singular effect of inducing him to decamp; probably he has not gone alone. But isn't it amusing that, since you so elaborately took his sitting—room, he will be convinced that you are a party to his undoing you, his staunchest defender?"

Eve's face gradually broke into an embarrassed smile.

"You haven't explained," she said, "how Madame Lawrence got the bracelet."

"Come over here," Cecil answered. "Take these glasses and look down at the Quai du Rosaire. You see everything plainly?" Eve could, in fact, see on the quay the little mounds of mud which had been extracted from the canal in the quest of the bracelet. Cecil continued: "On my arrival in Bruges on Monday, I had a fancy to climb the Belfry at once. I witnessed the whole scene between you and Miss Sartorius and Madame Lawrence, through my glasses. Immediately your backs were turned, Madame Lawrence, her hands behind her, and her back against the railing, began to make a sort of rapid, drawing up motion with her forearms. Then I saw a momentary glitter. . . . Considerably mystified, I visited the spot after you had left it, chatted with the gendarme on duty and got round him, and then it dawned on me that a robbery had been planned, prepared, and executed with extraordinary originality and ingenuity. A long, thin thread of black silk must have been ready tied to the railing, with perhaps a hook at the other end. As soon as Madame Lawrence held the bracelet, she attached the hook to it and dropped it. The silk, especially as it was the last thing in the world you would look for, would be as good as invisible. When you went for the police, Madame retrieved the bracelet, hid it in her muff, and broke off the silk. Only, in her haste, she left a bit of silk tied to the railing. That fragment I carried to the hotel. All along she must have been a little uneasy about me. . . . And that's all. Except that I wonder you thought I was jealous of the Count's attentions to your friend." He gazed at her admiringly.

"I'm glad you are not a thief, Mr. Thorold," said Eve.

"Well," Cecil smiled, "as for that, I left him a couple of louis for fares, and I shall pay his hotel bill."

"Why?"

"There were notes for nearly ten thousand francs with the bracelet. Ill—gotten gains, I am sure. A trifle, but the only reward I shall have for my trouble. I shall put them to good use." He laughed, serenely gay.