



"Yes, sir, it is," Mr. Bevis said in a very calm and decisive tone.

"Oh, no! I—I think not, at least," gasped Mr. Tempany, but observing the shrewd look on Mr. Bevis' face, which said as plainly as possibly that the sale of that bracelet was the price of the service he had rendered, Mr. Tempany subsided into a frightened and uneasy silence.

"Oh, Podmore! This is really too good for Amy—much more than is necessary, I'm sure," said the widow, who was gazing with every demonstration of rapture at the ornament.

"Yes, Theodosia, so I think," acquiesced Mr. Tempany, eagerly. "It's too rich; I'm sure she would like something quite plain much better. A gold band or a simple bangle would be much more suitable. I think I will change it."

"No, Podmore; I have an idea. Amy was delighted with my bracelet, and she shall have it. I will keep this one instead of my own as a present from you," said the widow decisively. "It will be the first really handsome present you have given me, you know."

"I'm sure you don't want it, Theodosia," said Mr. Tempany, with a groan. "It—it doesn't suit your complexion. I'm afraid"

"You think not? Look, Mr. Bevis. What do you say?" exclaimed the widow, clasping the bracelet on her shapely arm.

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Bevis, in a tone of emphatic admiration, for which Mr. Tempany hated him on the spot. "Nothing could look handsomer."

"Very well. Then that is settled," said Mrs. Bramwell Jay, pleasantly. "I'm sure Amy will be glad to get my bracelet back again."

"You will have the stone replaced, of course, sir?" said Mr. Bevis, in a businesslike tone, as he took up the discarded ornament.

"Oh! certainly," interposed the widow, before Mr. Tempany could falter a remark. "In fact, I think the setting should be renewed altogether. It is too old-fashioned."

"I will make a good job of it," replied Mr. Bevis, putting the case on one side. "Good day, madam. Good day to you, sir."

Mr. Tempany went out of the shop without uttering another word, being quite speechless with mingled emotions. His horror at the probable amount of the jeweler's bill was only equaled by the maddening feeling of helplessness which kept him from remonstrating. So far from experiencing satisfaction at his escape, he was now inclined to think that it had cost him too dearly, and his sentiments toward Mr. Bevis had changed to deep resentment. He excused himself from accompanying the widow for the remainder of her drive, feeling that he must be alone to brood over his crushing misfortunes. The lady seemed neither surprised nor hurt at this sudden desertion, and Mr. Tempany had an uncomfortable suspicion that she rather enjoyed his discomfort. She was charmingly affable, however, and overwhelmed him with expressions of gratitude for his handsome present when he showed her into her carriage.

"By the bye, Podmore, dear," she exclaimed, putting her head out of the window as she drove off, "what could have

induced you to say in your letter to Amy that this lovely bracelet was a heirloom in your family?"

This significant speech rankled a good deal in Mr. Tempany's mind when he had sufficiently recovered from his state of horrified bewilderment to think it over. It really sounded as if the widow suspected she had been imposed upon, though she had not scrupled to turn the circumstance to account. It may have been owing to a guilty conscience, but Mr. Tempany certainly fancied that from that day forward the widow began to manifest decided coolness toward him. So apparent did this become to him, that if he had had any self respect he would have terminated the engagement; but as he regarded his marriage, as we know, from a very material point of view he was not inclined to be easily affronted.

At the last moment, however, an unexpected obstacle occurred. The widow's solicitor intervened with some very plain suggestions about a marriage settlement. This did not suit Mr. Tempany's views at all, and being unable to come to terms with the lawyer he appealed somewhat indignantly to the lady herself. Mrs. Bramwell Jay refused to interfere, saying that she was entirely in the hands of her legal adviser, and the upshot was that, finding the widow's fortune was so strictly tied up that he might be reduced to the unpleasant necessity of supporting his household with his own money, Mr. Tempany resolved to remain a bachelor until a more favorable opportunity offered.

Of course, this was a dreadful blow to him. It aged him considerably, for when he came to add up what his engagement had cost him one way and another in actual pounds, shillings and pence, he was fairly horrified at the amount. Mr. Bevis' account brought tears to his eyes and reduced him to a state of incipient imbecility for days. He had to pay it, however; nor did he get a farthing discount. But it was at least a faint consolation to think that he would recover something out of the fire. The bracelet would fetch a good round sum, even at second hand, and this reflection buoyed him up a little so long as he was permitting to indulge in it. But, alas, even this small solace was denied him, for in acknowledging a small parcel containing the presents she had made him, the widow wrote as follows:

*Dear Mr. Tempany:* Thanks for your sad, sad letter and enclosures. I do not like to think of what might have been but for those dreadful lawyers! I return all the dear gifts you gave me except one, which I am sure you will allow me to keep and wear as a souvenir. The bracelet—your last gift—I cannot bring myself to part with, and I promise to keep it always—always! Your friend and well wisher,

THEODOSIA BRAMWELL JAY.

"ALL pens are alike to me," said the clever young woman, "and all pens would be alike to you if you only knew how to break them in. Don't moisten your new pen between your lips before you begin to write. Don't say charms over it or squander your substance in gold pens. Take your cheap steel pen, dip it into the ink, then hold it in the flame of a match for a few seconds, wipe it carefully, dip it into the ink and you have a pen that will make glad the heart within you. It is a process I have never known to fail."