

fellow passenger a two-shilling piece. He helped her and her daughter to alight, and made them both a bow, and there his adventure with them would have ended, if, an hour later, on arriving at his club, he had not found on the cushion of the seat which the young lady had occupied, a gold bracelet, with the name of "Ada" engraved on it in turquoise.

The finder of this trinket was a young and nearly ruined baronet, Sir Charles Aylmer. A good looking fellow, too blithe-tempered to reckon the cost of pleasure or to stickle about the company in which he sought it. He left a handsome fortune on the turf without losing his reputation with it. He possessed certain domestic proclivities which had survived his acquired tendency toward dissipation. Thus his visit to Barnes had been for the purpose of seeing an old nurse who had been pensioned by his family, and with whom he went to take tea once regularly every quarter. Modest as these entertainments were, he rather looked forward to and enjoyed them, for nature had made him, like other pigeons, to live in a dove-cot, not in the company of rooks. However, Charley Aylmer rather shirked the idea of a visit to Fulham to renew an acquaintance with people who were evidently not of his set, and it is probable that he would have simply sent back the bracelet by his servant, with a note if the following day had not been Sunday—that is of all days he found it most difficult to spend. To tell the truth, he was also a little curious to see whether the girl of eighteen was as pretty as she had seemed to his indistinct scrutiny in the cab.

He consequently went to Fulham, arriving just as Mrs. Twilles and her daughter were returning from church, with highly gilt prayer-books in their hands, and he was greeted like one who was expected. Ada had missed her bracelet, and was afraid she had dropped it in the road, which distressed her, for it was a keepsake. Blushing slightly, the young lady echoed her mother's thanks, and appeared to the baronet a very comely girl, indeed, quite gay and sensible, too, with no missish awkwardness, but sparkling blue eyes that looked you softly in the face and a complexion which the poets wrote about before the days when perennial rains soaked the lands. Sir Charles had just handed his card to the maid servant when the ladies debouched around the corner of the road, and, as soon as Mrs. Twilles had read the name upon it, she evinced middle-class appreciation of aristocratic prefixes by coloring to the cheek-bones, and earnestly entreated the baronet to luncheon. To have refused an invitation so cordially tendered would have been a discourteous act not in keeping with Charley Aylmer's character. He accepted without fuss. Miss Ada seemed pleased, and the guest would have been pleased also if good Mrs. Twilles had not begun Sir "Charlesing" him at every phrase, and apologizing for a number of things which called for no apology, as for instance, the simplicity of her bill of fare, the plainness of her furniture, and the absence of Mr. Twilles, who had gone to spend the day with a friend in Putney. All this did not prevent the luncheon from being an excellent two o'clock dinner of joint and apple-pie, and the baronet missed the truant Mr. Twilles but little. Besides Ada and her mother, the family circle included three small cousins—one boy and two girls—who giggled much and ate largely.

Who Mr. Twilles was did not transpire during the banquet, nor did Aylmer trouble himself upon the point, seeing that Miss Ada's accomplishments would have fitted her to grace any social circle, even the highest. He was fairly captivated, and had not worldly wisdom to conceal it. Though the amusements of the day were restricted to conversation, the piano remained closed and the garden untreadable by reason of the unusual dampness. Ada was drawn to

showing that she could talk on most subjects, cleverly, without forwardness, and that she possessed sensibility without affectation—rare gifts. She was in fact quite a pearl of price, this winsome daughter of Mr. Twilles; so that, before Sir Charles took his leave, he had made his plans for keeping up an acquaintanceship which promised him some agreeable hours in summer, when riverside Fulham is a pleasant district to visit in a steam-launch, whether to lunch on sloping garden lawns, full of the scent of roses and pinks. Mrs. Twilles invited her guest to dinner on the following Thursday; he on his side invited a friend who was in the habit of giving him boxes for the play (Ada had mentioned she delighted in theatres), and begged permission to send a box promised him for the Gaiety on Tuesday.

When a man of thirty has never been seriously in love, the first attack of the tender passion is likely to be a very sudden and severe one. Sir Charles Aylmer had no idea that he was in love with Ada, but he thought of her all that night and the following day, and grew dismal lest she should learn that he had frittered away his money on horses' legs and should think meanly of him for his folly.

On the Tuesday he went into the city on business with his stockbroker, and having torn off his gloves in alighting from his hansom, turned into a shop near the exchange to buy a new pair. His amazement may be conceived, when behind the counter he saw Ada and her mother quietly selling shirt collars to a brace of merchant's clerks. Over the glass behind them were the abominable, "Twilles, Hosiery," in staring gilt letters.

Mrs. Twilles turned scarlet. Ada grew pink, and looked sorry that Sir Charles should appear so stupefied. He recovered himself, however, laughed at the unexpected meeting, bought a pair of gloves, and reminded Ada that he hoped to meet her at the Gaiety that evening (the box had been sent to Fulham over night), walked on more foolish than he had ever felt in seeing her, and buttoned their jackets over thousands of his money. He had not gone a dozen steps down Cornhill before he heard a breathless voice behind him, crying:

"Hi!" and he was accosted by a plump little man with pepper and salt whiskers and shiny blue eyes, who, thrusting a cool dry hand in his said: "Sir Charles, I am Mr. Twilles, and delighted to see you. You dined at my house on Sunday, and I am sorry that I wasn't there. What do you say to a chop in the restaurant across the way? Come along, I want to have some talk with you."

Mr. Twilles strode rather than walked. His hands fidgeted with a tick gold watch-guard, as if he were in tantrums about the time, and he dated across the road among the omnibuses and cabs as though he much preferred the risk of being knocked down and run over to that of losing an instant. Aylmer followed him, bewildered, and wondering whither this would tend. Expostulations were of no use, for the nimble hosiery had preceded him. He darted up the stairs, caught up the menu, as he called it, ordered luncheon which proved his cognizance of the science of eating, and including a bottle of hock, well iced; then, as soon as his half-reluctant guest was seated, patted him patronizingly on the cuff, and said:

"Now, Sir Charles, just listen; do you think my daughter Ada is selling gloves in that shop because she couldn't afford to ride in her carriage with the best of 'em? Let me tell you, Ada will have ten thousand a year the day she marries."

"I am very glad to hear it—for her sake," rejoined the baronet, with well-bred composure.

"My name is Twilles in Cornhill," resumed the hosiery, buttering a slice of his roll, and eating it to make the time pass; "but I am Riggers in Piccadilly,

where I sell Belgian lace, and Chuckleborough in Burlington Arcade, where I deal in Birmingham jewelry. I keep a pawnbroker's shop in the Minories; two fish stalls in Billingsgate and a wine vault in the London Dock. What do you say to that?"

"You are a lucky man, Mr. Twilles," replied Sir Charles in astonishment.

"So I am," replied the commercial pluralist, lifting a prawn from a cut-glass saucerful of ice and crushing it. "But I've not told you half yet. I'm the Jones who advertises the Purgative Bath Buns, I've three smacks employed in the Pilchard Fishery, and I turn out boxes of sardines as good as those the French sell, and twice as cheap. I bought up ten thousand acres of standing corn in southern Russia last year, and I have got a contract for supplying the Montenegrin army with cork helmets. The Pope sent me his blessing and a silver cross, though I don't hold with Popery, because I rigged out one hundred and fifty pilgrim monks with my patent monastic ulster at two guineas a head or sixty shillings for those who have hair lining, because they are doing penance. I've a license for music and dancing at a public house of mine at Holloway, and I'm at the head of the Terra de los Fiveros Emigration Agency, bagging thirty shillings apiece for every emigrant who likes to go and take his chances out there against the sun, the snakes and the mosquitos."

"See what it is to have several strings to one's bow," smiled Aylmer, who, not, being devoid of humor, was growing amused.

"Several strings, you call it. I think I could count a hundred of 'em if I tried," replied Mr. Twilles, rapping his knife on the table to accelerate the waiter's arrival with a dish of cutlets; "where there's money to be made I make it—just mind that. I'm the owner of a proprietary club; I've opened a meeting-house for the Salisbury Plain Shakers—admission sixpence. I've inaugurated three ranks, invented a new game of tennis, which people can play on their housetops when they haven't a garden, and manufactured the new "tourist's boot," with a knife, fork and spoon in one, a tooth brush and comb in the other, and looking glass inside both soles, which are hollow. Then I'm going to send Messrs. Biggar and Parnell about the country to give a course of lectures on parliamentary tactics, and I have started a new magazine to which Mr. Gladstone will contribute an article next month."

"Enough, enough," broke in the baronet, laughing, for the cutlet had now been served. "I see you are a universal benefactor, Mr. Twilles—but what can I do for you?"

"You can become my partner by marrying my daughter," said Mr. Twilles, harpooning a cutlet. Sir Charles gave a slight start at this unceremonious proposal, but Mr. Twilles, whose mouth was full, waived his hand to check him from speaking. "You go on eating, Sir Charles; I can talk and eat at the same time. My daughter was mighty struck with you the other day, and her mother says you were so, too, with her—and mothers don't make mistakes about those things. Now, I watched you to-day when you came in our shop, and I saw you wince, though you didn't see me, because I was in the back shop counting the petty cash. Why did you wince?—because Ada was selling gloves? But she does that because I choose her to be useful instead of wasting her time and my money. If she were married she wouldn't sell gloves, you see; and I'd rub out the name of Twilles over the door, which I only keep there because the Cornhill shop was the first place where I set up in business. As to education, Ada has been brought up like a princess, and 'ud make you a good wife, whilst her money would come in nice and handy to set you on your legs again, pecooniarily speaking."

"Who told you that I was off my legs, Mr. Twilles?" asked Sir Charles

Aylmer, arching his brows, with more good humor than resentment in his tone.

"You're ruined, like Pompeii, Sir Charles; but that's no great matter, for if some did not get ruined others wouldn't get rich," said Mr. Twilles, smacking his palate with his tongue to try the hock. "Why, Lord bless you," added he, "there isn't a lord or baronet whose money matters I don't know something of. I've even got some of your papers in my hands, and, with all my respect, I'd exchange it for Baring's any day. If I offer you my daughter it's because I think you and she would make a neat pair, and because Mrs. Twilles, you know, would be mighty pleased to hear Ada called your ladyship, but, of course, I don't expect your answer to-day. Take time to think about it, and, meanwhile, see as much of Ada as you like. If I've seized the matrimonial bull by the horns in this summary fashion, it's merely because I knew that you'd take fright and leave Ada in the lurch if you'd suspect she was only a hosiery's child."

"How can you think such a thing," protested the baronet, amiably bantering. "All honest people, and all lovely girls especially, belong to nature's nobility."

"That's true, though you don't quite believe it," said Mr. Twilles coolly. "Now, just finish your Stilton and I'll pay the bill. We shall meet at the play to-night, and you'll dine with us on Thursday—that's settled. But on the day when you marry Ada you'll step into a ten thousand a year, which, by the way, may surprise her more than you, for she has no idea how rich she is. I've not told her, because I don't like girls to give themselves (h)airs."

Sir Charles Aylmer laughed, and was much inclined at that moment to treat the whole thing as a good joke; but two months, day for day, after his luncheon—having in the meantime visited Fulham innumerable times—Sir Charles proposed to Ada and was happily accepted. On the afternoon when this auspicious business business was duly settled, Mr. Twilles drew his future son-in-law aside by a coat-button, and, whipping out a note-book from his pocket said:

"Now, you're engaged, you'll be wanting to give Ada a lot of presents, bookies and such like. Just buy 'em all of me. I'll sell 'em to you cheaper than those fellows on Bond street. Say what you want now, I'll take your order."

A local genius who has given the subject much study, has concluded that the man is not born yet who can elicit public admiration by his way of falling down.—[Detroit Free Press. And the man who tumbles down can't "tumble" to what it is makes every one laugh.

Perhaps with the best intentions, but yet with indiscretion, especially at this time of the year, the Burlington Hawkeye says that lager cures corns. If, adds the New York Herald, advice of this kind continues everybody will be curing corns. And the result is that they become more "corned" than ever.

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