

Madeira and claret, Mr. Watson contrived to maintain a countenance and demeanor of serious, earnest, marvelling and believing interest, while Mr. Dilbury expatiated on all he had read, seen, or heard, on the subject; accompanied him to some of the exhibitions; brought him the new books that were published respecting it; hunted tip cases in private practice, that did not find their way into the newspapers; and finally, just at the moment of need, when the ambition to magnetize was beginning to rage in the bosom of his intended father-in-law, completed the conquest of that worthy old person's affection, by offering to submit his own outward man to the mysterious exercise of that power before which the professor had felt his own so rebuked.

The offer, we scarcely need say, was joyfully accepted; and the experiments thereupon instituted were, in the highest degree, successful—as was, perhaps, to be expected. Never was magnetizer more elate and triumphant; never was subject more unconscious and docile. Mr. Watson went regularly to sleep in a minute and a quarter, when the old gentleman only stared at him; if he added the passes, the sleep came in three quarters of a minute, and was considerably more profound and absorbing. And then the somnambulist doings and sayings were so very astonishing! Wherever Dilbury wanted him to go, Watson went—whatever Dilbury wanted him to see, Watson saw—whatever Dilbury willed him to say, that Watson said, or he said nothing. Innumerable were the glasses of water he swallowed, pretending to take them for coffee, or champagne, or small beer, or south side Madeira, just as the old gentleman required; and there was not a key in the old gentleman's pockets, that had not been transferred into a book, a pine-apple, a pistol, a watch, a cannon-ball or a turnip. Divers headaches, moreover, twinges of incipient gout, symptoms of confirmed indigestion, and other maladies of no outward and visible seeming, had been speedily alleviated by the application of the magnetic fluid; and, in short, Mr. Dilbury, with the aid of his most capital "subject," had gone very successfully through all the received arcana of the marvellous science.

The effect of all this upon the prospects of our young lovers was by no means salubrious. As the stock of Watson rose in the market of the old gentlemen's affections, that of his rival went down apace, considerably accelerated in its decline by the imprudent candour with which he disclosed his somewhat contemptuous

incredulity, not unfrequently in direct avowals, and always by looks and manner not less explicit than language. That unhappy trick of "sniggering," to which he acknowledged his propensity, in the dialogue with his mistress, was neither diminished by time, nor conquered by his efforts to maintain a becoming gravity of deportment on special occasions; and the upshot of it was, that when Master Hamilton did at length "pop the question," not to Miss Harriet—that had been done long before—but to her magnetical father, he was distinctly informed that the said father entertained other views and designs touching the disposition of the young lady in matrimony.

Now this was a rather astounding piece of intelligence, both to the lover and his mistress; yet to neither was it especially unaccountable. They had long since fathomed the project of Watson, as we have seen; they understood perfectly well both the means by and the purposes for which he had so ingratiated himself with the father; and they were firmly determined, both of them, that he should not reap the fruit of his ingenuity and his perseverance. But how to defeat him—that was the question. They might indeed run away and get married, without the old gentleman's leave; and, in fact, this solution of the problem was considerably more than hinted at by the lover; but Miss Harriet objected, for divers reasons, which it is not requisite here to specify, and it was agreed to consider the elopement as a *dernier resort*, to be practiced only in case of all others failing; an arrangement recommended to both parties, by the consideration that the young lady's fortune was not absolutely her own, but subject to the testamentary caprices of her respectable father, who might, if he pleased, cut her off with a shilling.

The result of a long consultation held upon the subject, was a determination to fight Mr. Watson with his own weapons; and, inasmuch as he had won the favor of Dilbury senior by craft and chicanery, to win it back from him again by an exercise of the same agencies. But to this end it was necessary to secure a confederate; and one excellently qualified, both in situation and character, was found in the person of John Wilkins, who held the very respectable post of tiger to Mr. Watson.

John was an uncommonly shrewd lad—as most tigers are—of some fifteen or thereabout; so small of his age, however, that he could well pass for not more than twelve, were it not for the knowing cast of his face, and the mature aspect of precocious astuteness which he had