

happiness of receiving this little present—these tiny bracelets, that——” said the doctor, taking her unresisting hand, and clasping them on her wrists. “shall have the happiness of—of—”

The lady gave a sigh.

“Oh, thank you, thank you, Dr. Winsom!”

“Adorable creature!” cried the stricken one, falling on one knee before the lady, “from the moment that I saw you I was struck by your beauty and grace. I worship you, I adore you. I know I am old!”

“No, no, no!” faintly cried the lady, as she grasped both his hands in hers.

“May I hope? Will you return my affections? Will you be my wife?”

“Yes! yes! yes!” with an eagerness that electrified the doctor with joy.

“Oh, how happy you have made me; but we have one difficulty, my dearest child——”

“None whatever,” sighed the maiden, “I am my own mistress.”

“Yes, but your aunt?”

The lady started wildly and clasped his hand tighter.

“Do not be alarmed,” continued the doctor, “I shall go to the old lady and say boldly, ‘I want your niece to be my wife. I must, can, and will marry Miss Lucy.’”

“Lucy!” shrieked the damsel.

“Lucy, then, be it,” cried the enraptured suitor, “dearest Lucy, I—— Why, mercy! what’s the matter? she’s fainted.”

Too true. The lady fell back upon the sofa apparently lifeless, while the doctor, frightened half out of his wits, rushed to a side table, seized a bottle of Eau-de-cologne, that opportunely stood there, and saturating his handkerchief with it bathed her temples.

What a position for him to be caught in if any one came into the room! Each instant, too, expecting Miss Euphemia’s return, he was paralyzed with apprehension.

She came to herself again at last, and faintly desired him to let her retire to her chamber.

“Merely a little hysteria, my darling,” he muttered, and led her tenderly to the door, not half sorry to be rid of the dilemma. Then hastily wiping the perspiration from his brow, he rushed to his carriage.

Having a patient’s house to call at on his way home, where he expected to be delayed, he dismissed his brougham, and resolved to walk the rest of the way home.

On knocking at the door, to his surprise the servant began to titter.

“How is your master?”

“He-he-he,” laughed the man, “he’s better,” then unable to conceal his merriment any longer, he burst into a smothered roar.

Utterly indignant, the doctor turned on his heel and left the house, intending to write a protest to the fellow’s master.

As he went along, to his amazement, the passers-by stared at him and laughed; every person had a grin on his face as he strode along the street;