

By every art in her power she tried to fire the spark of Hymen in the doctor's bosom, and the only consolation she attained was the fact that

"—No other fairer rival
Gained the dowry of his love."

And yet Cupid shot a straight shaft at last right into the centre of the doctor's unsusceptible heart.

To Acacia cottage, the dwelling place of the chaste Euphemia, came on a brief visit a niece of that lady, one Lucy Dodd. She was a fair haired girl of two and twenty, full of animation, vivacity and coquetry. Like Imperial Cæsar, she came, and saw, and conquered. At the first interview the doctor admired her, at the second liked her, and at the third adored her.

It was amusing to see how the aged spinster copied her youthful relation in dress, in manners, and coiffure; and to hear her relate the fable of some personal friend having taken them for sisters, was refreshing in the extreme.

Lucy's sojourn was to be short, and the doctor felt that he must make hay whilst the sun shone.

The natural respectability of his disposition developed itself even in his love-making. He did not come empty-handed to the shrine of his devotions, but brought his offering of jewels and of gold—a pair of bracelets—and he determined to seize the occasion of presenting them as a fit opportunity for the momentous proposal.

The day arrived. With less respectability of demeanour than the doctor had evinced in any action for years, he hastily got into his brougham, and bade the coachman drive to the habitation of his charmer.

The wheels of the carriage had almost rolled him to his destination, when, with a sudden start, he felt in his pockets, in his cushion bag, burst into a most plebeian perspiration, and muttered:

"Heavens! I've forgotten my spectacles. What shall I do? Drive back and fetch them?"

Alas, he had judiciously timed his arrival when he knew, cunning man, that the aunt would be absent from home at a Dorcas Meeting, of which she was a distinguished member, and upon reflection, too, he thought that the accident was a fortunate one, the absence of his glasses would make him look younger, so he resolved to go at once to his fate.

"Are the ladies at home?" he blandly enquired of the domestic. "Miss Dodd is out, sir, but Miss Lucy is in the drawing-room."

Glorious opportunity! The very hour, too, seemed to favour his mission, for it was dusk; and to his delight he found the lamps unlit, and the object of his devotion enjoying a quiet musing in the twilight.

Hurried out of propriety by the nervousness of his emotion, like all bashful men, he plunged at once without preface, *in medias res*.

"My dear young lady, do not move I beseech you. I am really most delighted to find you alone. I have come in fact with that hope."

The lady begged him to be seated.

"Will you do me the honour—I may say, give me the unbounded