

How many minutes thus passed I am unable to tell, for I was absolutely drunk with the deep draughts of bliss I was quaffing. I was at last startled into comparative sobriety by a sound close at hand, which jarred most audibly upon my high-strung nerves. It was an every day, vulgar, female titter, and within three feet of my elbow. Before I had any time for speculation, it had grown into a full mouthed laugh. In another moment a candle was lit, and the summer house was flooded with light, and then, before my eyes (but certainly not in my arms) stood pretty Mary holding her sides, and laughing as if she would burst them. And who in the name of Venus, had I been hugging and kissing so furiously all this time. One glance told the story. It was black Moll the cook, a great, fat, frowsy, greasy, "she nigger," with a head a yard long (almost) and nose like a flat iron. The sooty wench was as grey as a badger, though her kinky wool was well tied up, to prevent me from feeling it; and sixty-five years if she was a day. For a single moment I tried to humor the joke, and laugh with the laughers; but the extraordinary noise I made absolutely frightened me. Far from being a *ha-ha!* it was a regular *boo-hoo!*—as much like crying as anything that was 'nt crying could be. Finding that that dodge would not do, I was preparing to cut and run, when another obstacle presented itself in the shape of the farmer's wife, who was still fatter than old Moll, and who completely blocked up the doorway.

'What on earth is all this rumpus about?' asked the old lady, as she stared round the place in every direction. Her eyes finally resting on Moll, she exclaimed, 'And what in mercy's name is the matter with you?'

'Dere's a heap de matter, mistress,' replied Moll I dont know but I shall git ober it dough; but I was a' mos' gone, dat's a fac'. Dis young gempelum done kiss me to def a' mos' indeed, mistress, shiore as ye're alive.

At this juncture, all eyes were turned upon the young 'gempelum,' and as the

novelists say "the effect can be more easily imagined than described."

The old lady however seemed disposed to be skeptical about the kissing.

'You Moll,' rejoined she, 'how dare you say such a thing?'

Indeed, an' deed an' double deed, it's de rale gospil! trufe, mistress. Jist you ax Miss Mary ef'taint. Asking Miss Mary was well enough, but answering was another thing. She nodded however and pointed her fore finger at me. I was worth looking at, about that time, beyond a doubt; and if a clever caricaturist had seen and made a drawing of me, in the character of a "stuck pig," it would have been a little fortune to him.

The farmer's wife still doubting, Moll became energetic:

Why, mistress, jist look-ee here at dese lipes o' mine I' raly was afraid young marster was a gwine to chaw' em all up into sassiage-meat, and den de way he scrouged me up in his arms! Great goodness, marry me! I had'nt no more bref lef in me dan a busted blather.

The old lady could not reject such conclusive testimony, as Moll's lipes; and fortunately for me, got so overcome by her exertions that she staggered back from the door, leaving the coast clear, of which circumstance I took advantage, and clearing the way of all remaining obstacles, with one bound I cleared the fence and regained my horse.

Stopping my ears, I dashed the spurs into the horse's sides. He bounded forward, and I tumbled off, like a sack of potatoes, the saddle rolling on top of me; some one at Mary's instigation having cut the girth. I regained my horse and quickly rode off minus my saddle, and at a rate that soon left my tormenters far behind.

There was much sound truth in the speech of a country lad to an idler, who boasted his descent from an ancient family.

"So much the worse for you," said the peasant; "as we ploughmen say—the older the seed, the worse the crop."