

at last, unable to endure it any longer, he turned angrily on a labourer who was more demonstratively cacechinatory than the rest, "What are you grinning at, fellow?"

"Whoy, you be so black!"

"Black!" said the doctor, "who the dickens would look anything else, annoyed as I am by a parcel of fools?"

But the crisis of his astonishment came when his own dignified man-servant, who rarely even smiled, burst into a vulgar guffaw the moment he saw him.

Running to his dining-room mirror he found to his horror that his face was black—black as that of the Moor of Venice. Merciful Providence, what did it mean?

Rushing to his lavatory he scrubbed with soap and water his offending features, but *miserabile visu*, his efforts were useless.

More soap more hot water, scalding water; alas, all in vain, *he was dyed as black as a negro*.

Then in a paroxysm of the most undignified trepidation he sat down in a chair to think.

Suddenly he started up.

"That accursed harridan! I see it all. The old fool has a camera and takes portraits; she has emptied a bath of nitrate of silver into that Eau-de-cologne bottle, and by all that's sacred, I've deluged Lucy with it!"

Sending for some solution of cyanide of potassium and other chemicals, he managed to change the colour of his countenance into a dirty yellow, and awaited further amendment from the hand of time.

Securing immediately the services of a brother physician to attend upon his most pressing patients, he took to his bed, and ordered no interruption.

On the next day a card was brought up to his bedside, and he was told that a lady desired to see him, who would take no refusal.

It was Lucy.

Hastily dressing, with beating heart, he hurried down stairs.

She was there, closely veiled, alas, he knew the cause, and opposite to her sat a young gentleman of five and twenty, with a supercilious grin upon his features.

"Miss Lucy," stammered the doctor, turning his back upon the young man, and trying to address his lady-love confidentially, "has your complexion suffered much?"

"Mine? Certainly not, Dr. Winsom."

"Thank goodness."

"But, Sir," said the young lady severely, "when on Tuesday last, I returned from the Dorcas Meeting whither I had been in Aunt Euphemia's place, I found her in an almost fainting condition, with her face as black as ink."

"And," cried the young gentleman, starting angrily from his seat, and continuing the story, "she says that you presented her with some jewels, which she will keep as evidences of your perfidy, proposed to marry her, and upon her refusing, dashed some terrible drug in her face that has occasioned this disfigurement."

"Are you mad?" groaned the miserable doctor.