

his mind one lovely evening, he was ordered by another darkie to attend his young mistress in the garden. As he approached her favourite parterre, with a well replenished watering-pot, the young lady was joined by her papa:

"Betsey! Betsey!" said the old man, in a quick, low voice, "where are you?"

"Here, papa, tending up the flowers."

"Pshaw!" muttered the planter, "you bestow more time on these flowers than I do upon my fine plantation. Leave the flowers to Sambo, and come quick to me."

"What's the matter, pa?" said Betsey, dropping a bouquet of roses, and running to him quite in a flutter.

"I have bad news for you, child—very bad news," and he shook his powdered head. "You have lost your husband—my nephew Henry is drowned—was lost in the wreck the other day. Don't look so pale, girl. There are other men in the world."

"Ja, pa! you don't say so. Well, how sorry I am. Why, it may be an age before I am married now. Poor Henry! To be sure I never saw him; so I can't be so sorry as I ought to be. I am sure I should have loved him very much. Dead! And what am I to do with all the fine wedding clothes you bought me, pa? Shall I be forced to lay them by and go into mourning, pa?"

"Indeed you will, my child. Dat, don't take it to heart, Bess. You are young yet—plenty of time to look out for a good husband. Well! well! so our best schemes fall to the ground. Henry was the last male on either side of our family—my favourite sister's only son. And he is gone! It cannot be helped. Poor Hannah! it will be a terrible blow to her. It has vexed me so, I have lost all appetite for supper. Sambo, what are we to have tonight?"

"Curried wood pigeon, massa! de rice steeped in madeira wine. Berry nice indeed."

"That's something new, Sambo—you make my mouth water," said the planter. "I want something relishing to console me under my present distress."

And away waddled the mountain of obesity, all recollection of his dead relative drowned in pleasing anticipation of the coming feast.

"Sambo," said Miss Betsey, who had a foolish habit of gossiping with her slaves—"my husband is dead."

"Den you be a widow, missa?"

"Not quite so bad as that, Sambo. If I were a widow I could not marry for a year to come."

"Dat would be bad indeed," said Sambo.

"Such a lovely young lady no get good husband for twelve long months! De berry monkey shake his head at dat."

"Ah, Tippoo! you heast! you have broken my best carnations!" cried the little black-eyed damsel, striking a pet monkey, which was the impersonation of all mischief, with a willow wand, she held in her hand. "I wish you were dead! I do."

"Ah, missa! You cry to make him pet alive again berry soon. I wish I were Tippoo!"

"Wish you were a monkey, Sambo! Why, that would be worse than being a nigger. The monkey cannot speak, and you can."

"Is dat de only difference," said Richard, hardly able to suppress a laugh, "between de black man and de monkey? Well, den, missa, me give de monkey de preference. He hab no voice to speak his grief—de black man hab voice, but dare not utter de big thought in his sad heart."

"He looked full in Miss Betsey's face, with his large, bright, eloquent eyes, until she blushed as red as the carnations which Tippoo had scattered at her feet."

"Why do you sigh, Sambo—are you unhappy?"

"Ah, yes, missa! Sambo berry much unhappy. When me sigh, den my heart speak—bounce! bounce!—no put him to silence. Me hold my tongue, but me no hold my heart—Sambo's heart berry large."

"And what does your heart say?" asked Miss Betsey, her natural coquetry getting the better of her prudence.

"Ah, missa Betsey! my tongue no tell my heart's secret—Sambo die first." Then, turning from the fair querist, Richard bent with greater assiduity over the flowers he was watering.

Now, Miss Betsey had a pretty shrewd guess as to the nature of Sambo's secret, for vanity is a quick interpreter of thoughts; but she wanted to hear it from his own lips, and scarcely knew how to bring it about.

At this moment Sambo discovered the bouquet which she had dropped on her father's approach, and gathering up the scattered roses, he proffered them, with a low bow, to his fair young mistress.

"No, Sambo!" cried Miss Betsey, colouring, and drawing back—"I cannot take them from your hand."

"How, Miss Betsey!" said Richard, almost forgetting his assumed character, in surprise at the frown which rested upon her brow.

"You are a slave! I never receive flowers from the hand of a slave!"

"I see what you mean, Miss Betsey. The flowers have lost their beauty and fragrance by being touched by a black," said Richard, proudly, and in his natural voice. "I am your slave—I am proud of being your slave. But no one on earth should call me so but yourself!"