

me for wife. The gods grant me wit to find a way to better fortunes!"

The rushlight guttered and went out a vile odour; he dropped the extinguisher on the blackening wick. As she did this the sleeve of her negligee caught in the handle of a drawer, which, being ill-fitted as inn drawers usually are, clattered with all its contents to the floor. It obviously contained the Sunday clothes of mine hostess' son, who, to judge from the size of each article, must be a lad of fifteen or sixteen. There was a coat of dark green broadcloth, a vest of fawn-coloured korsemerie sprigged with shamrocks, and breeches of palest grey wanken.

A vivid colour rose to Chloe's round cheeks; her eyes sparkled; her lips parted to show the prettiest of teeth. "By the little cupid!" she said under her breath. "Here's a way out if I but dare!" Then she continued to empty the drawer, bringing to light a box that held a muslin stock, a pair of neat ribbed stockings, buckled shoes, and a pointed beaver.

"The good lad will perforce stay away from church this Sunday," she murmured. "Like as not he'll never know till the day—and 'tis but Tuesday morn yet. Ubb! if so be 'tis possible, they shall be sent home ere then, though sure one never knows what may happen! In any case, there'll be a surprise for him when he opens this drawer, since I'll leave for him my figured damask negligee. But, Lord!" she fell a-laughing again—"my stepmother may pay, since 'tis her doing that I leave the place in so strange a fashion!"

She began to deliberate—as she had often deliberated of late—concerning a haven of refuge, and at last decided in favour of an ancient kinswoman of her mother's, who dwelt, so she had heard, in a lonely grange that rose from a concave of Kinderscout. Patience Cuthbertson was the lady's name; ever since Chloe had learned to write, she had sent this spinster a letter for Christmas, and had in return received small presents, such as garnet shoulder-knots, tanned handkerchiefs, and fans whose satin displayed engravings of Cipriani's masterpieces. With her, although she knew nothing of the lady beyond this exchange of courtesies, she was quite satisfied that she would receive shelter, and, if needed be, concealment for as long as it pleased her to keep away from her own folk.

She whipped off her clothes quickly, and in a very few minutes presented a richly coloured picture of a lovely jokin. She stood before the long, spotted mirror, moved her arms this way and that, touched her forehead in obsequious fashion, and realised that unless her hair were clipped or hidden, every wayfarer would know her for a lass. Her first impulse was to cut off as much as need be, her second to tie it in a knot at the crown, and wear the hat firmly pressed down. Fortunately, however, as she lifted the hat there fell from the interior a black bobwig, with hair crisp and fresh as though but just taken from Dobbin's mane. She slipped it on, paused for a while, aghast at the change it wrought; then pressed her hands to her side, lest that her peals of mirth might rouse the house. When she had grown more used to her quaint appearance, she found her road-book, and consulted both map and index in the hope of finding some way of reaching Mistress Cuthbertson's demesne. It was only with considerable difficulty that she discovered the easiest route, which passed by way of Derby, of Matlock, of Bakewell, and then into the High Peak. She had her stepmother being not illiberal—some few guineas in her purse; by means of these she could travel in comparative comfort.

On reflection, she wrote a few lines of explanation to the landlady, enclosed in the folded paper a guinea, then left it with her negligee in the drawer. Half-an-hour later, when she had donned the youth's shoes—after well padding the toes—she unlocked the door, stole very gently to Minee's chamber, where she found the tender soul sleeping happily, with a brave a snore as any alderman. She felt some compunction in leaving one so devoted without a word of farewell; and although she knew herself ill-versed, she wrote another message, which she placed upon the pillow. Then she kissed the frill of Minee's snowy nightcap, descended the stairs on tiptoe, and after some curious wanderings, found a side door, whence a flight of stone stairs descended to

the garden. The rain had set free the fragrance of the flowers; a light wind came from the west; the river that bounded one side was in flood, its waters foaming and peat-laden.

Chloe sought unavailingly for some way of reaching the highway, but found that the only gate opened into the stable yard, where the post-hoys slept in the lofts above the stalls. She climbed at last to the top of an artificial mound, and with no little trepidation contrived to draw herself to the coping of the boundary wall, whence, with a prayer for safety, she let herself to the coping of the boundary wall, whence, with a prayer for safety, she let herself descent to a mounting-block of red sandstone, and then—after a breathing space—to the white limestone road, which the storm had left inch-deep in mud. There was a pleasant border of green grass on either side; on this, taking off her beaver (which was dangerously loose in the fitting), she ran as quickly as her dainty breeding would allow in the direction of the rising sun, which was already shooting rays across the valley. But, alas! the way was all sodden, and at each step the water rose high as her

spots. Her course was towards a precipice—there was absolutely no chance of escape. She heard the brute's panting breath, and shrieked aloud in anticipation of the meeting of fangs in her tender flesh.

Fear awakened her; she sat up with a start, and found that the sun was already high in the heavens. She bathed her fevered face in the stream, realised with distress that she was exceedingly hungry, then stole back to the road, and, as far as possible keeping in the shade of the trees, made her way to the next posting-house—one that bore the sign of a fiddler, and the legend "Hark to melody." There a fat serving-wench who was whitening the steps of the lobby dropped her cloth and gaped as foolishly as if in sober truth she had never seen a handsome lad in her life.

"I will have breakfast," said Chloe, in as gruff a voice as she could command, "and that quickly. Pray give my order at once."

"Sir to you!" said the maid, who now held both wet hands to her bosom. "What would your honour require?"

"A dish of chocolate and as many almond biscuits—" began Chloe. Then

mistaken, the person you're a-seeking of!"

Chloe gave a little cry as a gentleman rose from the oval table, on which were placed a fine sirloin, a brown loaf, and a bottle of wine. The girl turned hastily to escape; but her eyes caught a strange reflection in a convex mirror, and simultaneously both hands rose to the back of her head. In her slumber the bobwig had shifted forward, and her glorious hair, loosened, had fallen down upon her shoulders. And never for one moment had she suspected that there was ought extraordinary in her appearance!

"Pray, Mistress Chloe," said the gentleman, who was but a few years her elder, and, moreover, remarkably handsome, "Pray, Mistress Chloe, what hast against me?"

"She found something vastly charming in his laughing impudent face; he was so good to look at that she could not eyes frown.

"Sir, you have the advantage of me," she began.

"Your father, Mistress Chloe, and I are brothers-in-law. This morning, arriving late in my room, I found my sister in alarm, tells me that you have fled all through fear of me. Sure you need not be so scared; give but the word, and I'll never come into your sight again."

"The ugly man," faltered Chloe. "I thought that he was my stepmother's brother."

The gentleman clapped his hands. "My godfather and uncle," he said, "who hearing that your party was on the road, made his way at once to the inn to bid all come to his house at Wolnote, which lies twenty miles away. A better soul never breathed!"

"You'll own that he's ugly," said Chloe, then bit her lip.

"Not in my eyes," he replied. "Come, mistress, I bid you give but the word, and I'll offend you no longer with my presence. Your poor father's abed at his inn prostrate from shock—my sister's posing in one direction in search of you—my uncle in another. Your abigail is in peril of becoming a Niobe. I came hither in a closed carriage—with command to take you back—if I found you, willy-nilly. But I'm not of those who regard women as chattels, and if you wish you may go your way for me."

Chloe felt momentary pique, then, after one look into his mirthful eyes, gave him her hand. He kissed it very gallantly, and held it long.

"I don't know," said the girl. "I don't know but that I go back without complaint."



IMITATION.

Can your parrot speak yet, Cohen?"

"Speak! He's a vander. And since I've had him he moves his wings as well!"

ankles. She carried her road-book in one hand, and paused to consult the frequent finger-posts, regarding them with a pretty intolerance after the first mile or two, since they bore no mention of her destination.

The sunlight grew stronger and stronger; and being unaccustomed, as any girl of her time, to walking, she soon felt somewhat overcome, and, seeing a stile on the left where a bypath entered a wood, she determined to leave the road and rest a while. A mountain stream ran there in a narrow ravine, its banks all white with stitchwort. Before Chloe had gone many yards she stumbled and fell gracefully enough upon the gnarled root of an ancient yew, where, finding herself in a restful position, she prepared to stay, with no attempt to rise. And there, before another five minutes had passed, she snuggled up against the bole, and with a little restful murmur—her nights had been very restless of late—she fell fast asleep. She dreamed that by enchantment she had been turned into a poor pitiful hare, and that she was being pursued across country by a yellow hound with liver-coloured

she flushed wonderfully, and, mindful of men's ways, ordered a tankard of home-brewed ale, and some ripe cheese and bread. But the lass, whose mouth opened ever wider and wider, did not budge. Her eyes grew round as crown pieces, her rich red disappeared, her chin began to tremble.

"Come," said Chloe. "I have no time to waste, and I must on with my journey. Are you mad or moonstruck to stare so?"

The maid recovered herself somewhat, then with many a look over her shoulder went indoors to the bar, and there whispered into the ear of a comely landlady, who came forward at once, pressing lips closely together.

"Please you to come this way, good-gentleman," she said mimingly. "And I promise you shall have all that you require."

Wherewith she conducted her along the lobby, and then, with a sharp movement, flung open the door of a parlour that was full of bright sunlight.

"Here, sir," said mine hostess, with a laugh—"here, sir, is, unless I be much

ALL FLESH

IS IMPROVED BY THE ADDITION OF

MELLOR'S SAUCE

ROWLAND'S KALYDOR FOR THE SKIN

Produces soft, fair, delicate skin, heals all cutaneous eruptions, and insures a lovely delicate complexion to all who use it.

Box, 2/6, of Stores and Chemists.