



"HER IDEAS OF TUNE WERE AT PRESENT VAGUE."

ing in Clapham, was bad enough. But that they—the female they this time—who turned up their noses at trade, and despised all "shop young persons," should have kissed and cajoled and copied the whilom attendant behind a milliner's counter, to whom a marriage with Mr. Smith had at one time seemed the wildest promotion, was quite too bitter a pill. In their resentment against the scheming couple, they almost began to believe that Guy Ryder might possibly have been more sinned against than sinning.

And when, very gradually and with extreme caution, Mrs. Brookes' mind was awakened to the state of affairs, when, as soon as the vacant eyes had regained an expression of sanity, and the clouded brain had been brought into a more healthy condition, the story was by degrees told her, it became apparent that she entirely agreed with Shingleby.

Very pale and sad, yet with an expression of utter calmness, which only faith in the Great Witness he had himself arraigned in his favour could have given, Guy Ryder stood on Thursday morning in the dock of the assize court at Lowchester, side by side with Mr. and Mrs. Smith. From the body of the court Stella, almost as white as he, and with her hand clasped fast in Mary's fingers, stood and watched him, wondering at his composure. It was perhaps at that moment, as the buzz of talk went on around her, and she saw how utterly apart from the pallid prisoner was all the curious crowd so eagerly gazing at him, that then and there Stella Brookes first realised that her heart, at any rate, was one with his.

One after another the witnesses for the prosecution were called. The banker's clerk who had handed to Mr. Ryder the twelve notes in exchange for the cheque, which experts swore to be a forgery, gave his evidence. The manager of the bank narrated how Guy had himself owned to the endorsement of that same forged document; whilst even Miss Brookes herself was obliged to tell the tale of her conversation with Mrs. Brookes, when the widow confided to her the fact that it was into Guy's own hands she had given the cheque of which Clive ultimately proved the possessor. It was some

relief to her over-charged heart that, in the course of cross-examination, she was able to explain fully Guy's extreme desire to induce Mrs. Brookes to call in a solicitor, and so to set investigations on foot. But take it for all in all, it was for two persons the most painful episode of all their experience when Stella was compelled to give testimony, as a witness for the prosecution, against the man she trusted with all her soul, and he was obliged to behold her suffering, without the ability to offer her comfort. It was to Guy's most intense relief that he saw that the person who assisted her from the witness box was dressed in sailor's garb, and noticed Jack, regardless of all beholders, salute his trembling sister with a most emphatic hug.

"We'll get him off, old girl, never fear!" he whispered cheerily. "Why, the whole thing has been my fault, as I've just been explaining to some lawyer johnnie or another. Fool that I was, I made him promise to do just what, like a brick, he has done. It'll all be as clear as mud once I can have my say. I came home on purpose."

And though perhaps he somewhat overrated the value of the evidence he could offer, testimony for which Mr. Keen, who had heard the story from Guy, had not even considered it worth while to summon him to England, and though Stella only half understood of what he was talking, still she heaved a sigh of rapture.

"Oh, Jack, I'm so glad you've come! Wynne always said you could help us if you were here."

"I wish I'd had your letter before," he went on. "But when a ship's