

8 IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

her. She is not patient when the dinner is kept waiting. Ah, mister?"

"Where is she?"

I pictured to myself a typical strong-minded British matron, or spinster, stern of feature, sturdy of will, Baedeker in hand, insistent upon her rights, and holding the station grimly against the chattering officious little Pole; and I looked for some fun. But, instead, he led me up to a girl, who contradicted in every particular my anticipation. She was some twenty years of age, well-dressed and as pretty as a painting; straight, regular features, flaxen hair and blue eyes; glorious eyes meant for laughter, but now clouded with trouble and nervous agitation. A picture of pale, shrinking misery that went straight to my heart.

"Here is an English mister who will explain," said the stationmaster with elaborate gesture.

I raised my hat and as she glanced at me, the colour flushed into her cheeks and her large eyes seemed to dilate with a new fear connected with my presence. In a moment it flashed into my thoughts that she had understood him quite well.

"The station master tells me you are a country-woman of mine," I said in English; "and has asked me to explain that the station is to be closed now."

There was a pause, her look one of blank dismay. She bit her lip and then stammered slowly with a rich foreign accent, "Zank you, sir; I cannot go. I wait for ze train and zomeone."

I accepted this as though it were the purest Eng-