

SUNSHINE-SHADDER

she proceeded to carry inside, but for the intervention of Maria who, noting her intention, quietly remarked:

"Just leave your umbrella at the door, Mrs. Riggs. It was so wet I scarcely thought you would venture for the fitting," she added as she ushered her customer into the plain but cosily furnished front room, where her fittings took place.

"Oh, rain don't stop me where a dress be concerned; but o' all the women, ye do beat the Dutch fer work," she added, as she collapsed comfortably into the one horse-hair rocker in the room.

"Tew think it a-pourin' rain 'n' ye a-diggin' ditches; that's wheer a man comes in handy, as I sez ter Bill."

Maria made a few futile attempts at jocularly and hurried to the kitchen at the end of the hall.

Closing the door she crossed over to the highly polished stove on which the kettle sang lustily, and shutting the damper, drew from her pocket the muddy find, which she laid upon the remotest corner of the stove to dry.

A hasty toilet followed, and she returned to the room a few minutes later, carrying on her arm a half-finished cashmere gown.

It was the first time in years her thoughts drifted from her task as she hovered around the tall, lanky figure, cutting here and stitching there. The weariness experienced in fitting this particular garment was almost overpowering, and as she inserted the last mouthful of pins into the many seams a sigh of relief unconsciously escaped her lips. It was before an old