

day she could do nothing but sit and watch the leaves fall. As it grew dusk she got up and lit the lamp. There was her knitting on the table. The woolly squares hanging from the needles were the foundations of a pair of socks that had been intended for him. Now, of course, they would go to the heathen via the parish church and the missionary society. No doubt the heathen would be more appreciative, though perhaps woollen socks in the tropics might be a little trying to the untutored savage mind. And then—

"Sophie!"

It was the voice of Mrs. Meadows, calling from the shop. And a moment later the good soul put her head into the parlour and added:

"Sophie! It's David. He's come to see you."

Sophie started to her feet. This was the last straw. David—that is to say Mr. Trotter—had been given to understand that his presence was no longer agreeable to her; and in spite of that he had the effrontery to call upon her once more.

"Tell him I don't want to see him, mother," she said. "After what's happened I don't want to speak to him again."

Mrs. Meadows turned back to the shop; but before she could repeat the portentous message, David was already at the parlour door. Mrs. Meadows smiled significantly and preceded him into the room. She was about to retire again, discreetly, when Sophie stopped her, impatiently.

"Don't go, mother," she said, with the impudency of the spoilt child that she was.

David was a big rosy-cheeked fellow, with plenty of confidence. The last was made evident by the deliberate way in which he put his hat on a chair, and then lifted a couple of brown paper parcels on the table. With a quiet "Good evening" addressed to Sophie, he proceeded to deliberately untie the string of one of the parcels. The knot was a little hard, and as no one spoke, the embarrassing silence was becoming intolerable. Finally David looked up.

"You sent back the few little presents I had gave you," he said, gazing directly in

front of him and addressing the opposite wall straight in the eye "an' so, of course. I'm bringing back those what you gave me."

"You could ha' sent them back," snapped Sophie. "There wasn't no need for to bring 'em yourself."

"Well, you see," said David, addressing the wall with the assistance of his index finger, with which he beat time to his measured words, "a man ain't some'ow so careful as what a woman is. Leastways, I s'pose that's what it is. Now, the things that you sent back to me, the was all spick and span, just like new, and——"

"Do for Faith Duker, perhaps," commented Sophie rather bitterly.

David affected not to be conscious of the interruption.

"These 'ere slippers, for instance," he said "which you worked for me. I 'adn't 'ad 'em long before my little fox terrier got at one of 'em, and before I could get it away from 'im, he'd eaten one of the pink roses and a couple of the forget-me-nots."

Mrs. Meadows was surprised into a ridiculous guffaw. Then, conscious apparently of the impropriety of her conduct, she evaded her daughter's eye, and became absorbed in contemplation of the ceiling. David could hardly help echoing this little outburst of encouragement with a grin of his own; and Sophie set her teeth together and felt that she was fighting the whole world single-handed and alone.

"Then," continued David, "these these 'ere braces."

Sophie turned her head away sharply. It was doubtful whether, in her altered relationship with Mr. Trotter, braces were things that could be discussed with propriety. The articles in question were luridly embroidered in red and blue upon a green background, and in anything like sustained silence they might have been relied upon to speak for themselves. It was evident, however, from their present condition, that they had been more decorative than useful; and David's attempt to strengthen the weaker parts by the addition of a piece of stout string had done nothing to enhance their artistic beauties.

David, remarking Sophie's attitude out