

IN THE TUMULT OF THE STORM 13

to his carriage with a supply of the literature supposed to be specially adapted to beguile the weariness of a long railway journey.

At that moment the clock was on the stroke of eight, and the mingled sounds—the hissing of steam, the din of voices, the rumble of luggage trolleys, the rattle of cabs, the shrill yells of newspaper boys, the incessant patter of rain on the rambling roofs—seemed to be accentuated. An inspector approached Haggar's compartment.

"Tickets—Southampton? Right! If you're going lady, you'd better step in. Train's about to start."

The prosaic official, quite unconscious he had intruded himself into two lives at an acute crisis, and had arrested the course of each, having looked at the tickets, drew back to allow Alicia to enter. She had to decide at once whether she would go or stay.

"Alicia, I insist——"

It was enough. She turned abruptly and hastily drawing a shilling from her pocket, slipped it into the official's hand.

The man had had too many glimpses of the romance of life to be surprised at anything. He stolidly accepted the shilling and shut the door, locking it with a swift motion of the wrist. He caught sight of the old man's face convulsed with rage, and he concluded that the young and pretty woman had good reasons for not wishing to travel with her companion.

The ticket inspector would have put her into the next compartment. It had but one occupant, a man already preparing to go to sleep; he was pulling