

THE 4:15 EXPRESS.

BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

A week had not gone by when I received a letter from the Secretary of the East Anglian Railway Company, requesting the favor of my attendance at a special board-meeting, then not many days distant. No reasons were alleged, and no apologies offered, for this demand upon my time; but they had heard, it was clear, of my inquiries about the missing director, and had a mind to put me through some sort of official examination upon the subject. Being still a guest at Dunbleton Hall, I had to go up to London for the purpose, and Jonathan Jelf accompanied me. I found the direction of the Great East Anglian line represented by a party of some twelve or fourteen gentlemen seated in solemn conclave round a large green-based table in a gloomy board-room adjoining the London terminus.

"I cannot tell. I saw them walking together down the platform, and then I saw them standing aside under a gas-jet, talking earnestly. After that I lost sight of them quite suddenly; and just then my train went on, and I with it." The chairman and secretary conferred together in an undertone. The directors whispered to each other. One or two looked suspiciously at the guard; I could see that my evidence remained unshaken, and that, like myself, they suspected some complicity between the guard and the defaulter.

"You hear, Mr. Langford?" he said. "I hear, sir, but my conviction remains unshaken." "I fear, Mr. Langford, that your convictions are very insufficiently based," replied the chairman, with a doubtful cough. "I fear that you 'dream dreams,' and mistake them for actual occurrences. It is a dangerous habit of mind, and might lead to dangerous results. Mr. Raikes here would have found himself in an unpleasant position, had he not proved so satisfactory an alibi."

The chairman's brow darkened. "Mr. Raikes," he said, sternly, "if you know anything, you had better speak." Vainly trying to wrench himself from my grasp, the under-secretary stammered out an incoherent denial. "Let me go," he said. "I know nothing, you have no right to detain me, let me go!"

Clayborough had not been in use for several weeks, and was, in point of fact, the same in which poor John Derrhouse had performed his last journey. The case had, doubtless, been dropped by him, and had lain unnoticed till I found it. Upon the details of the murder I have no need to dwell. Those who desire more ample particulars may find them in the written confession of Augustus Raikes, in the files of the Times for 1880. Enough that the under-secretary, knowing the history of the new line, and following the negotiations step by step through all its stages, determined to waylay Mr. Derrhouse, rob him of the seventy-five thousand pounds, and escape to America with his booty.

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