

Then, every woman in the gardens gave a little start or a little shriek at the noise of the great cannon which signalled the commencement of the fireworks, and the rush to the terrace, where the best view was to be obtained, became a stampede.

‘Do you mean to go on to the terrace?’ asked Pauline.

‘No, madam,’ said Carpentaria, teasingly. ‘I mean to go on to the foreshore of the river. The tide is low—we shall be alone—we shall see both the crowd and the fireworks; and we shall be secure from interruption.’

With one of his pass-keys he unlocked a gate giving access to a tunnel leading down to the river. They passed through, and he locked the gate again. They arrived at the edge of the stream just as the first cluster of rockets was expanding itself in the firmament. The scene was impressive, and the roaring cheers of the hurried crowd behind and above them did not detract from its impressiveness.

‘So you have something to tell me?’ he remarked, tapping his foot idly against a stone. ‘I also have something to tell you.’

‘Really?’ she answered.

He examined her face and figure. She was dressed in mourning, for Mrs. Ilam had died within two days of the events set down in the previous chapter, and Carpentaria thought that