

an accident, to be sure. But that's not *my* belief. I say he's up to some mischief. And now comes the question: What are we to do ?'

Mr. Ronald, listening with his head down, and without interposing a word on his own part, made an extraordinary answer. 'Leave it,' he said. Leave it till to-morrow.'

'Why?' the clerk asked, without ceremony.

Mr. Ronald made another extraordinary answer. 'Because I am obliged to go out of town for the day. Look after the business. The ironmonger's man over the way will help you to put up the shutters at night. If anybody inquires for me, say I shall be back to-morrow.' With those parting directions, heedless of the effect that he had produced on the clerk, he looked at his watch and left the shop.

IV.

The bell which gave five minutes' notice of the starting of the Ramsgate train had just rung.

While the other travellers were hastening to the platform, two persons stood passively apart as if they had not even yet decided on taking their places in the train. One of the two was a smart young man in a cheap travelling suit; mainly noticeable by his florid complexion, his restless dark eyes, and his profusely curling black hair. The other was a middle-aged woman in frowsy garments; tall and stout, sly and sullen. The smart young man stood behind the uncongenial-looking person with whom he had associated himself, using her as a screen to hide him while he watched the travellers on their way to the train. As the bell rang, the woman suddenly faced her companion, and pointed to the railway clock.

'Are you waiting to make up your mind till the train has gone?' she asked.

The young man frowned impa-

tiently. 'I am waiting for a person whom I expect to see,' he answered. 'If the person travels by this train, we shall travel by it. If not, we shall come back here, and look out for the next train, and so on till night-time comes, if it's necessary.'

The woman fixed her small scowling grey eyes on the man as he replied in those terms. 'Look here,' she broke out. 'I like to see my way before me. You're a stranger, young Mister; and it's as likely as not you've given me a false name and address. That don't matter. False names are commoner than true ones, in my line of life. But mind this! I don't stir a step farther till I've got half the money in my hand, and my return-ticket there and back.'

'Hold your tongue!' the man suddenly interposed in a whisper. 'It's all right. I'll get the tickets.'

He looked while he spoke at an elderly traveller, hastening by with his head down, deep in thought, noticing nobody. The traveller was Mr. Ronald. The young man, who had that moment recognised him, was his runaway porter, John Farnaby.

Returning with the tickets, the porter took his repellent travelling companion by the arm, and hurried her along the platform to the train. 'The money!' she whispered, as they took their places. Farnaby handed it to her, ready wrapped up in a morsel of paper. She opened the paper, satisfied herself that no trick had been played her, and leaned back in her corner to go to sleep. The train started. Old Ronald travelled by the second class; his porter and his porter's companion accompanied him secretly by the third.

V.

It was still early in the afternoon when Mr. Ronald descended the narrow street which leads from the high land of the South-Eastern Railway-station to the port of Ramsgate. Ask-