

IN THE TUMULT OF THE STORM 17

being positively rude, see her large eyes, with a strange, dreamy, far-away look in them he had never seen in any woman's eyes before. Those eyes were singularly fascinating, and he wondered what colour they were. The yellow light of the lamp, the continually shifting motion of the carriage, gave him no assistance. She kept them constantly fixed straight before her, and, owing to the angle at which he was looking, he could not get a full view.

In vain he racked his brain to find a reasonable excuse for renewing the talk. He could think of nothing that did not savour of intrusion. Offer her part of his railway literature? It was vapid and tame even to him who had nothing to occupy his mind. It certainly would not tempt her. And the train rocked too much for reading, while the patter of the rain and the howling of the wind were far too distracting for concentrated attention.

To pass the time Graydon continued to study her furtively and ponder, as he had hitherto never pondered over a woman; and he pieced out a score of theories to account for that half-sad, half-defiant expression. The train usually took down a good many passengers for the ocean-going steamers starting from Southampton. Was the lady one of these travellers? Was she going to India or South Africa? Was she leaving behind her someone she loved very much?

But why should he think she was going abroad? Were there not a hundred reasons why people should travel to Southampton besides going out of England? He found himself hoping that one of these reasons might be the cause of her journey. And then he laughed at his folly. What was she to him?