

more mature than my years, she had put her plump little hand on my mouth and had said, laughing, "How can an aunt marry her nephew! Am I not your aunt Tricksy, sir?"

On the 16th of June Mrs. Thorold and her daughter went up to London and were to return on the evening of the 17th. Sometimes my father had tried to persuade Tricksy to choose a husband, rather than forfeit her fortune. Surely some of her lovers were men to whom she might eventually become sincerely attached, though she was not romantically in love with them. But Tricksy was firm: she would not marry if she did not love.

John and I went down to the station to meet them. We found we had mistaken the time, and had an hour to wait.

"Let us take a walk," I said, "and return here to meet them."

As we went on, we found, about a quarter of a mile further, that some workmen were busy mending a temporary bridge across a deep stony ravine, over which the train passed. There had been heavy rains, and the passage of a weighty goods train had effected a solution of continuity on this bridge, besides committing other damages. They were very busy working at it as fast as they could. Unfortunately, in their haste they had not sufficiently observed that the supports of the bridge had been thoroughly weakened, and as a last heavy plank was laid paralleled to the others, there was a tremulous swaying of the whole, and then it cracked and cracked and tottered slowly over, burying several workmen in the ruins. At first, all of us who had escaped, were occupied in rescuing these men. In doing so I fell and injured my knee. They were all hurt—some severely so. We attended to them as best we might, when suddenly a distant whistle was heard. Good God! the train was due. It must be stopped—but how. At that point "dangerous" had always been signalled, and it came on very slowly. But what was to be done? there was no time. We saw it, a speck in the distance; but coming on, coming on. Shame on me for having felt it, but my first impulse was to rush down the bank and fly, whither I knew not; anywhere not to hear, not to see the inevitable crash. Where was John?

He had stood for a moment, pale as death; and then he ran forward, shouting, waving his hands, throwing up his arms, standing in the very centre of the line. I called to him from the bank. I had crawled there to make signals to the advancing train. "She's there!" were all the words he said. Had the horror of the moment turned his brain? Did he hope to make himself heard or seen? It was madness. Inexorably the train came on, very slowly, but surely, on. I could see the stokers turned towards John, making signs to him, and a line of heads outside the carriages, evidently not understanding him; and then, as the moments passed, and it came nearer and nearer, John inspired by the very ecstasy of insanity, threw himself right across the line.

It was a forlorn hope. It might or might not arrest them. So imperceptibly did they slacken their course that I did not think they were doing it; but, thank Heaven! it was possible to do it, and they did do it. After a few seconds