

own ruin; still, had she the full use of her senses, it might have been averted. But Sally Randall was driving in the opposite direction from Shorecliffe, though she did not know it. She was on the London road; and her companion never intended her to go to Shorecliffe at all. And now, when they reached the first stage at which the night mail changed horses, Mr. Alfred Blanchard had no hesitation in putting up the trap there, with a lee to one of the grooms to drive it back to Bothwick and, alas! no difficulty in persuading Sally Randall to go with him to spend a week, as he said, with his mother and sisters.

And there, in the inside of the mail, the young girl spent the night; her power over herself completely gone, huddled up in the corner, almost like a bundle of clothes.

But Mr. Alfred Blanchard was not to have it all his own way. An unexpected impediment to his carrying out all his bad designs was met in a form which he did not expect. The night mail drew up at the gates of an old-fashioned house, from which, wrapped up in a number of shawls and cloaks, emerged a middle-aged lady, to make a third inside passenger.

Miss Amherst was of middle height with a calm, pale face—a woman who said little but did much in life—one who formed her own opinions, and acted on them, too.

The lady was now going to London to see into the affairs of a family left orphaned in her village; and she was attended by a stalwart footman, who was rather breezily clad for such a windy night; but who seemed to be strong enough to throw off any amount of wind and weather. This young man gave one the general impression that he was not to be trifled with; and with this air he mounted the coach, when he had seen his mistress safely deposited inside.

Miss Amherst spoke but little during the journey to London; but, as morning broke, it was quite evident to Mr. Alfred Blanchard that, so far as light would permit, she had been studying him, and his companion, during the night. This study became more intense as the light brightened, if indeed it could be said to brighten; for the storm of the night had

not yet quite worked itself out. Miss Amherst had suspicions that this was no ordinary case of travelling, and they were turned into certainty before she left the mail.

But now we must go back to Shorecliffe, and the people there. Several times did Dick Cables climb the cliff, and look in at the cottage, to see if Sally had come home; but the day closed in, and there was no sign of her appearing. The young man would have gone after her, but he knew she had slept at her aunt's before now, and he believed that, at any rate, she was quite safe. As to the light, the unwelcome thought forced itself upon his mind that he could not for entire certainty depend upon her for it. "Let her stay," he said, somewhat bitterly to himself; "and should the little Nell come in to-night, and should she feel when she comes home in the morning that, so far as she is concerned, her father might have been drowned, perhaps it will be a lesson for her for life. It may make her 'true to her trust,' without which she will be no good to any man for a wife. Will she ever be any good to me?" said Dick to himself. "Perhaps it will be wiser to put off the wedding, and see. Could I depend upon her," said he, "even if she were here? But I can depend on Mary;" and then the young man remembered many a little act of self-denial, many a punctual performance of a small duty, which had passed uncared for at the time, but which now came to recollection, bringing with them their reward in the position of honor and trust which the young girl was assuming in Dick Cables' mind.

"'Tis hard," said Dick, "for so young a thing, and so weary as she is now, to keep awake the livelong night; but she'll do it. If she has been faithful with the parson's child, she will be when the life of her own flesh and blood may be at stake."

And Dick was not about to be disappointed. As soon as night closed in, Mary Randall prepared for her long watch. The young girl first carefully looked to the window panes and tried them with a lighted candle, and wherever the glass was loose in the leads, or there was a piece broken, she carefully pasted thin paper, until she made the window, at that side at least, quite air-