

conviction was therefore forced upon us that the guard had been left behind. He was not on the engine, or he would have stopped the train : he was not on his way to it, or we should have been able to see him by the light of the side lamps of the train ; and he was not in the van, or his door would have been shut, and his brake vigorously applied long ere this, and of that there was not the slightest indication.

Ours was truly an awful position. Passengers in a runaway train, on a black and moonless night, and with neither engine-driver or guard to help us !

The Middlesham and Dillmouth railway was about twenty-two miles long, and there were four intermediate stations—Ackridge, Durton, Felton and Ifcombe,—between the two termini. Two of these stations were passed, and we had therefore run about half of the distance. We had been fifteen minutes in doing one-half, and would most probably do the rest of the journey in less time than that. A miserably short time to save so many lives ; but something must be done. I was an *employé* of the immense railway concern, of which the Middlesham and Dillmouth was but a branch. I have used the sounding word *employé*, but the simple fact was that I was a reliever clerk, and that I was at that very time on my way to Ifcombe to take the place of the station-master, who was then seriously ill and unable to attend to his duties. I was very often called to this particular kind of duty, and had, in consequence, acquired a very thorough and practical acquaintance with the outside work of a railway.

I would try to reach the engine by walking along the platform or the carriages. My mind had been made up to that long ago, for through my unenviable experiences of railway accidents, I had got into the unconscious habit of forming a course of action for myself for almost any eventuality which could turn up. I had, besides, known of two cases of runaway trains. In both cases the steps of the carriages were used as the means of communication with the engine. In the first case successfully, but in a second, the guard was smashed against a signal-post in swinging from one door-handle to the next, and the train itself went tearing on until it came to the terminus, where it tore up the buffers, and was finally deposited in fragments about the platform and the first-class refreshment room. Fortunately it was an empty train and late at night, so that no one was injured except the engine-driver, who broke his leg in jumping from the engine, when he found he could not stop it ; and the guard who was killed. The other case was that of a train which seemed certain to come in collision with another at a level crossing. The drivers put on their engines at full speed and jumped off. Almost by a miracle there was no collision, and the train went on without any one to check it. As it happened, the guard had seen the danger, and had also seen the two men jump off the engine, so that when the crossing was safely passed, he made the best of his way along the