

generous-hearted fellow, but just at this time when my lady love was waiting for me at the end of the road, it seemed an insult to ask me to be satisfied with anything less than her dear self, and no doubt the impression still remains on Mrs. Abbott's mind, whom I now saw for the first time, that I was a very surly fellow.

John stretched himself out lazily in his arm-chair, put some tobacco in his pipe, and began—

Well, it was about twelve years ago, when I was engineer on the Tiger, that I met my wife. We had stopped at Marl's crossing to get water, and while we were waiting, I sauntered into the little waiting-room that was kept there for the accommodation of passengers. The person who had it in charge was the widow of old Charlie Green, and one of the best women I ever knew. She was a motherly old creature, so that nobody ever thought of keeping anything from her, and she hadn't been there a week before she knew it was the secret ambition of Tom Bradley's soul to run the line, and that Ned Long was silently enduring agonies lest the company should find out that he was in liquor the time when he ran his engine off the track. I had several times executed little commissions for her, such as bringing her down needles and thread, and getting the glasses re-set in her spectacles, which Reub King knocked out when he tried to kiss her, and so I was a prime favorite of hers. No sooner, then, did she see me than she trotted forward and said :

"John, there's a poor creature in there crying fit to wash her eyes out because some villain picked her pocket on the road, and the conductor put her off at this place because she had no ticket. Now, John, won't you get her through? She wants to go to R——, where her husband is at work. Now, you will, won't you?" and the old woman looked just as interested as if it was for herself she was begging.

"Let me see her myself, first," said I, "before I promise," and she let go of my arm and walked along in front of me, looking just as well satisfied as if the woman was already on her way rejoicing to her husband.

I always did have a soft heart—even my stepmother gave me credit for that; and I must confess to a twinge of pain when I saw the little woman crouch down on the sofa in a dark corner of the room, with her face buried in her hands.

"Madam," said I, in as soft tones as it was possible for me utter, "Mrs. Green tells me your pocket was picked on the road. Will you let me see if I can be of any service to you?"

She raised her tear-stained face to mine, and after an involuntary start at its blackness—for we had been out on the road three days—probably encouraged by Mrs. Green's hearty advice of "that's a dear! just tell him and he'll fix it all right," she answered: "It is just as the lady says. I had scarcely time to reach the train, and could not stop to buy a ticket, and when I searched for my pocket-book, to pay the conductor, it was gone. Of course, as I had neither ticket nor money, he put me off at the first station we came to, which was this."

"Where do you wish to go to?" I inquired, when she concluded.

"To ——," she replied. "My husband is employed there, and I was going to him, for I fear he is ill, as he has not written for some time; but now I know not what to do, as I can neither go forward nor backward without money."

"What is your husband's name?" I inquired.