

to be correct, for the conductor informed us that a freight train down the line had taken this inconvenient season to run off the track and cause a general smash-up. Impatient travelers crowded around and plied him with questions. How long would the delay be? How great was the damage? and many others; but the replies were unsatisfactory at best. It would be several hours before we could get out, and it might not be until morning.

Very cheering news, certainly, considering the fact that there were only day coaches on the line and no accommodations in the village.

"It is surely a providential opportunity to meet Ruth's country cousin," said Ethel, who never could see the serious side of things. "Come, girls, we might as well see the sights."

"I suppose we might as well laugh as cry," said Amy, nevertheless heaving a mighty sigh as she thought of Carlton, thirty miles away.

Most of the passengers were already on the platform and news of the wreck had brought all the rest of the inhabitants to the scene; so a crowd such as Downey—for such was its name—had never seen before was gathered at the train. In the midst of this we lost sight of the red hat and green plaid waist. Ethel was unconsolable, but we finally persuaded her to go for a walk, and when we came back it was almost dusk. Another telegram had come saying that the wreckage could not possibly be cleared away before morning, and so we must spend the night at Downey.

Passengers fortunate enough to have lunches were sharing with those who had none, and the grocer was doing a thriving business in crackers and cheese. We were among those who had none, and were laying in a supply of such things as could be obtained, when the red hat appeared. Its owner contemplated us in silence for some time, and I was just preparing to open a conversation when she began,—

"Say, where'll you sleep?" Her question was evidently addressed to me, and Ethel nudged the girls violently.

"We haven't begun to think about that yet," I said, gaily, "you see we are just having supper. Will you tell me your name?" I added after a moment.