

the express-engine's head-light flared in the tunnel, and the train presently shot into view. It was moving fast considering the grade.

Sangster waved his light and yelled. Not that his yelling could do much good, for the noise in the cab of a locomotive travelling fast is considerable. But Finch saw the light, and short and sharp came the triple call, fearful and imperative, "Brakes! Brakes! Brakes!"

It made every heart on the train thrill, for even the uninitiated felt its terror, and every train-hand sprang to attention. Even the mail-sprongers paused in their work.

In her home on the hill-side, Loo Sangster heard it, and her life seemed suddenly grey, and cold, and lonely.

Finch's face was very grim as he opened the valve of the air-brakes. His fireman had the steam and hand-brakes hard down. There was a great screeching of brake-shoes and hissing of brake-cylinders, but the Star-Duster swept irresistibly into Number Four tunnel. Jefferson, on the second engine, was asking himself the question which was perplexing every train-man.

"What is wrong at the other end of this tunnel?"

There is seldom trouble in a tunnel.

The speed was diminishing, but would it diminish quickly enough?

Suddenly, just as the lower end of the tunnel was being reached, the head-light flickered on standing water, and the big engine splashed into it. Then she buried her cow-catcher and pilot in two hundred tons of clay and rotten rock which fell at the moment.

Sangster started running up the line.

With a jar the train came to a stop.

The Star-Duster did not appear to strike the obstacle hard, yet her cow-catcher was twisted out of all shape, and her smoke-box stays torn off. She sprang upwards and crushed her funnel on the low roof; the glass in her cab-windows was

shattered; her guage-glass burst; and the boiler-tubes gaped from the boiler ends so that the escaping steam and water drowned her fire. The steam drove her driver and fireman from the foot-plate, but before he left, Finch lifted the safety-valve by means of the relief-lever, and the throbbing roar of steam filled the long tunnel.

A guard came to the Big Tank.

"What's wrong?"

"Slip," Jefferson replied. "Tell the passengers not to move. We'll take them back immediately."

A brakesman carried this information.

When the steam had blown itself out somewhat, the engine-crews climbed over the slip and saw the real danger.

For a moment no one spoke.

Then someone said, "My God!"

It sounded like a prayer.

"You'll have to shove the train back," Finch said to Jefferson. "The Tank isn't damaged."

"Can she do it, do you think?"

"She'll have to," Jefferson replied.

A thin, sharp "crack" resounded through the tunnel.

"The whole darned hill's on the move," a brakesman said. "Sooner those cars are out of this, the better."

They fired-up on the Big Tank till her guage showed 180 lbs. pressure.

"She'll just about do it," Jefferson said.

"Crack!" the tunnel spoke again.

"Uncouple!" cried Finch.

The couplings clanged, and the Tank whistled boastfully—"I'm reversing."

"Let's see you do it," the Star-Duster snarled.

The brakes came off with a long-drawn hiss, and the smaller engine grunted. The sand-pipes spouted, and she shuddered like a giant who finds his task beyond him.

"Bang!"—the exhaust steam from her funnel struck the tunnel-roof and brought down a shower of rotten brick and lime.