IN DOUBT.

down, the reading of the huge advertisements of the Atlantic liners, and there is an outburst of light, as an express comes puffing in. Porters have sprung suddenly up, the refreshment rooms are open, and steaming coffee is prepared, whilst a score of passengers rush out in headgear and habiliments that give more or less indication of attempts to sleep, and betray the degree of the accustomedness to travel. There is the bustle of the coming train-the rough rattle of the luggage-barrows, the "crack" of the air-brake as some carriage is detached, and finally the command which, in the chilly night air, is sharp and decisive-"Take your seats." Then with a slamming of doors, a shrill whistling, and a few slow, preliminary puffs, the dark locomotive creeps away, increasing its pace as it goes. The train has left work for some of the few attendants at the station: there are hampers of fish, crates of yeast, and a multitude of small parcels to be examined, sorted, and carried away; there are mailbags and parcels to be seen to, and it is a little time before the platform resumes its quiet-if quiet there is possible, when shunting and rumbling seem so frequent, and when the "goods," the "mineral," and the "passenger" seem almost to alternate.

Look out! Steaming through the station goes one of the few newspaper trains, and as it goes there are thrown out fifty or sixty little bundles of papers,

and one or two of heavy appearance; and off sweeps the engine and its two or three vans with steadying carriages.

Then from one of the sidings a "parly" is slowly shunted into one of the docks, and "Lamps"-as Charles Dickens called that functionary-rolls along his wooden tray of globe lights, and throws here one and there one to his abettor on the carriage-tops, whilst a few hasty rubs at carriage-door handles complete the preparation for the departure, but not till after another express has brought its freight and contributed its quota, by dilatoriness, to the impatience of those who wait for it. Butchers for a distant market drive up, and chaff the porters with an easy assurance, begot of custom, about the delay; a weary woman or two look doubtingly on, and finally shut themselves up in one cold compartment to sleep, if sleep will come, on hard cushions. Knowing travellers look to the telegraph notice-board and dispose themselves accordingly; whilst one or two persistently pace the platform with a steady tramp and a gait bespeaking the sailor.

Finally, with a rush and a scurry, in comes the express; and though we know well our branch train follows it, we rush to secure seats, and our night at the junction ends, before the darkness is chased by the dawn.

J. W. S.



