

indeed he started, and as our eyes met he seemed to divine my thoughts.

'You clear out!' he said, with a suppressed fierceness that boded no good, and thrusting his hand as he spoke into the breast of his coat. 'I gave you your choice, Britisher! What! You've been spying, have you? Better keep a quiet tongue, for fear I should be tempted to remember the old proverb, 'dead men tell no tales.' And I heard the quick low clicking of a pistol's lock as he glared upon me.

'Broken water, forward there!' sang out the voice of the look-out man at the bow. 'Breakers ahead! 'We are on the Moines!' cried half-a-dozen of the terror-stricken passengers, whom the sultry head of the saloons had tempted to remain on the breezy deck. I looked eagerly out, and could plainly see the long curved line of white foam ahead of us.

'Down helm!' thundered Gregg, and the scared steersman obeyed the fatal order, the execution of which was followed by an outcry of half-incredulous horror and dismay from the affrighted passengers as on we went, rushing upon the reef at the full speed of our maddened course. An instant more, and with a crash and a shock which threw most of us from our feet, the steamer grounded on the shoal, heeling over as she did so, while spars, side-rails, and paddle-boxes cracked and splintered like reeds in a whirlwind. The screams of women, the oaths and outcries of men, made the scene a very babel of confusion.

Conspicuous among a group of passengers on the hurricane-deck were Mr. Harman and his daughter; the latter of whom, in evident terror, clung to her father's arm. I sprang towards her, difficult as it was to tread the slippery slope of the deck, over which the waves of the Mississippi now broke, as if the wrecked vessel had been but a dam exposed to the fury of the current. The clamours that reached my ears as I made my way onwards were significant enough.

"She's going down." "The ship's settling in the water." "She's stove in, fore and aft." The boats—the boats!"

"This way, this way!" exclaimed I, offering my hand to Alice as she stumbled in the effort to traverse the reeling deck.—"Pardon me Mr Harman, but this is no time for ceremony." The old merchant angrily repulsed me. "We need none of your assistance, sir" he said, in a high harsh voice. "Miss Harman is with her father and requires no other protector. Let me pass, sir." And he pressed on, supporting Alice, who seemed half fainting, and approached the place where the starboard boat was being lowered over the steamer's side by half-a-dozen stalwart fellows of unmistakeably salt-water aspect. Several of the crew, with a number of the frightened passengers, now tried to crowd into the boat the rather that the steamer rolled beneath us, and careened as if going down bodily. Gregg, who seemed quite cool, drove them back again. The other boats, he said, would be manned and lowered immediately.

Courage and self-assertion seldom fail in a moment of supreme danger to enforce submission, and the mob of terrified creatures made a rush in the direction of the other boats, which had been wilfully rendered useless while Gregg and his confederates profited by the opportunity to lower away the starboard cutter, into which they quickly sprang, while Mr Harman and his daughter were hurried over the side. "Now, sir!" whispered old Sam as he nimbly swung himself into the stern-sheets, and, unbidden, grasped the tiller-ropes: "Alfred! Alfred!" cried Alice breaking silence for the first time, and looking up at me with her inno-