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### THE LAST OF THE PROSERPINE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

'HILLOA! mister,' exclaimed a husky voice in my ear; 'jest help me to a cigar-light, will you—this coon has lost his fuses.'

My reverie, as I stood moodily at the edge of the rickty landing-stage at Grand Gulf, kicking over maple-chips into the coffee coloured flood of the Mississippi, as it seethed and swirled beneath, was roughly interrupted by this unceremonious address, and I turned, perhaps with some impatience of manner, towards the speaker. The recognition, as our eyes met, was instant and mutual.

'Why, Mainwaring, you here—of all locations! Nothing new—no counter-orders, eh? such was the greeting of my former acquaintance.

"Surely, Gregg," I returned with a smile, 'I might be as much astonished to the full at meeting you here, as you could possibly be at seeing me. I thought you were in China.'

Mr. or Captain Gregg laughed a little awkwardly as he seated himself on a log that had rolled from the wood-pile that stood ready for the supply of passing steamers, and bade the negro porter who carried his slender baggage set down the bag and valise at his feet. 'Yes, I ought to have been there. Gospel true that, mister. But—you know my old enemy, the bosom-serpent, as I may say,' he continued in a tone that was half-jesting and half-apologetic—'in fact, I did too much of this,' and he lifted the hollow of his hand to his lips, and went through the pantomime of drinking; 'it was my watch, one moonlight night, when the first mate came on deck, and found the sails a shiver, the ship out of her course, and the helmsman taking a social pannikin of grog with your humble servant, while a lad was at the wheel. It wasn't discipline, I know that; but I give you my word, Britisher, that if they had met my excuses in a gentlemanly spirit, I'd have kept as sober as a judge, and as bright as a beagle, all the rest of the voyage. They chose to clap me in irons. Then, when they liberated me, there was a muss, and the first-mate, that I blamed more than the skipper—you remember the sour old Aberdeen man—got an ugly knock with my brass knuckle-