

## THE SOWING OF ALDERSON CREE

and terrifyingly forth. Good to laugh, and for the moment to forget, for had they not laughed they might just then have been unreasonably compelled to do just the opposite.

"You po' little honey," David said tenderly, putting his arm about Mary's waist, and supporting her as they started down the mountain; "you po' little thing, you must be most dead."

Mary looked at him with wide bright eyes. "Not so near dead es I was er little bit ergo," she answered with a laugh that quivered.

Walking behind them Hedrick broke into a shrill whistle, a whistle of many flourishes and much triumph, and of exceeding loudness — astonishing loudness, when one remembered the extreme smallness, not to say meagreness, of the person conducting it. A whistle which was partly to drown to his own ears any whispers which David and Mary might have for each other, was partly a stout defiance of the weather's unpleasantness, but was most of all an expression of his own supreme satisfaction over the termination of the morning's work.

's far as David and Mary were concerned, however, his discretion was wasted, for they were too subdued to talk much, and were besides too shaken out of the usual ruts of reserve to have greatly cared even if Hedrick had chanced to overhear anything they might have had to say. Mary, moreover, was still so physically exhausted, that the mere effort of walking, even with David's arm about her, required all her strength.