

ROMANCE

"Yes. He left a note for me," interrupted Diana, "telling me what he did with them."

"Spiked!" murmured the old aristocrat, patting his hands together.

"And if he has the jewels, he has certain rights to them. They were mine." Frances met glance for glance.

"Yours? Stole them from you, his wife?"

"Perhaps he only took them," she modified.

"All women are fools."

"But all men are not rogues," said Cranford urbanely.

"Mr. Smead," said Diana, "I was born at sea, and my mother was buried at sea; and while she lay dying in the stateroom below, calling for you, calling for you, you told the steward not to bother you; you were busy playing cards in the smoke-room on deck. There is a burial at sea between you and me, Mr. Smead. These are the last words I shall ever speak to you."

Cranford stepped to the door and opened it.