

went, slick away in the death-swoon, and I believe the poor young lady thought you were cleared off creation, she took on so, pretty thing."

"You mean Alice—Miss Harman," I said anxiously. "Is she"——

"Make your mind easy; she's all right," said the rough but kindly surgeon; "tis but an hour ago she said to me: 'Yes, doctor, but are you sure he'll live?'—meaning you, squire; and when I answered there was no fear, if you'll believe me, she took my hand and kissed it, she was that pleased!" And the Missourian raised his large brown paw, and contemplated it with a sort of wonder, as if the connection of ideas between his weather-beaten digits and a tender young lady was too inscrutable for the human intellect.

"But her father—Mr Harman?" I faltered out.

The good doctor was manifestly embarrassed. He felt my pulse again, and then blurted out: "Dead, Mr Mainwaring. He was cruelly hurt, and 'twas a mercy for him to cease to suffer. The poor lady we picked up is dead too. There's but four alive out of the wreck yonder—you, me, Miss Alice, and the nigger Lysander. The third wounded person we brought ashore, though you didn't know it, war the captain."

"What! Gregg?" exclaimed I, raising myself on my elbow.

The surgeon nodded. "Yes, that villain, Paul Merrion Gregg. He just lived long enough—a ghastly sight he was, with every rib crushed in—to confess. Mr Harman made a confession to."

And the doctor placed before my eyes a sheet of paper, on which were traced, in feeble characters, such as a dying man's hand might pen, but in the well known handwriting of my former employer: "Too late—ask—forgive—treat Alice well—my full consent—when her husband—make restitution—goods—insured—fraud—the *Prosperine*—save—good name." That was all.

"To cut a long story short," said the surgeon kindly, seeing my bewilderment: "Mr Harman, who was, you know, as proud as Lucifer, was in pecuniary difficulties, and saw no honest way out of them. By ill luck he fell in with Gregg, and the two between them concocted the precious scheme that has nearly made a finish of us all. The old *Prosperine* was bought, vamped up, and laden with a worthless cargo of damaged goods, which were insured for an enormous amount as really valuable property; while the plan was, that Gregg was to get the steamer cast away on the Banc des Moines, when the insurance companies would be cheated out of enough to keep the old firm above water. Mr Harman was aboard with his daughter—I needn't say she knew no more of the plot than seraphs did—to disarm suspicion; and they were to be landed safe, and all strangers left to chance it, to heighten the horror of the shipwreck; but the boiler burst when the engines ceased working, and the pair of accomplices were caught in their own trap. The old man repented before he died; and if you want to hear more here is Miss Alice herself."

Alice it was, careworn, pale, and sad, but with hope and love ineffable in her pure eyes, as she bent over me, and her tears fell upon my face.

"Live for me, dear Alfred," she said simply: "we shall be poor—but I will be a true wife, if you will have me dear. I have no one left now but you."

My story is told. I have for years been happy as the husband of Alice; and although the debts of the firm were heavy, and to do jus-