

two girls left the house, the carriage paused once more at the east gate and Imogene alighted, leaving M. Antoine Le Grand and wife to pursue their way.

woke the sleepers above and below in the cottage. Mrs. Mason and Mildred, whose rooms were on the first floor, escaped without difficulty; but it was a



THE ELOPEMENT.

"Thank heaven, she is out of my way at last, and I am once more Prof. Gettwood's heiress," muttered Imogene as the sound of the carriage wheels died away.

The first faint signs of dawn were barely visible in the east when Lee Mason sprang from his bed gasping for breath. He felt, rather than saw, that the room was full of smoke; but for the time every faculty seemed dormant. Mechanically he began dressing; then, as the awful import of the situation came to him, he rushed for the door. One glance without revealed the long hall in flames, no possibility of escape there. He reeled, but essayed to cry out. His voice died out in a choking wail. A frenzy of despair and terror seized him; then as suddenly he became calm and self-possessed. Closing the door he groped his way back to a window, and throwing up the sash, sprang to the ground. "Fire, fire!" was the cry that

hand-to-hand conflict with the fiery demon to rescue those above. At last the Professor, Veeder, Imogene and the servant girl stood in safety on the ground; but Pet—the idol and darling—was nowhere to be found. Both the Professor and Lee braved death to investigate for themselves; but she was not to be seen, neither did she answer to their frantic calls.

"She must have rushed out into the burning hallway and perished," was the explanation that passed from lip to lip, white with horror.

It was supposed that the fire was caused by the explosion of the upper hall lamp which was always turned low and left burning.

As Imogene left the carriage that memorable morning Pet fell on the cushions in a faint. In vain Monsieur strove to resuscitate her as they rolled rapidly out of the city and on toward Salem. At the latter place he dismissed the carriage, immediately taking another for Eugene City.

Not much like a wedding journey was this long, tiresome ride to the half-insensible bride and her desperate groom. During all the weary way the former lay on the cushions, her head on Monsieur's breast. For the most part she was in a death-like stupor, but occasionally she moaned or opened her eyes. But there was no look of intelligence in the depths of the blue orbs, and they were soon closed again. Monsieur was almost frantic, but dare not stop or summon medical aid yet. At heart he was not a bad man, only narrow and selfish. In disposition he was given to melancholy and inclined to be tragical. From his first meeting with Pet he had loved her in his weird, fanatical way, nor had his threats of self-destruction been vain ones, in case he was obliged to give her up forever. But from the first it had been his fixed determination to win her at any cost. Now, just as he had seemed to possess her, she was drifting