

away from him, and that forever. If she died, he knew that he was her murderer, and the thought almost overthrew his not over-well-balanced reason. Again and again he muttered: "*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* if only *ma chere's* life can be spared!" and almost he promised to return her to her family.

At Eugene City he had intended to again change carriage, deeming this the best plan to avoid detection (naturally Pet's friends would expect them to escape by rail), but her condition forbade it. A quiet, home-like boarding-house was happily secured, also competent physician and nurse. In a few hours the stupor passed, giving place to a raging delirium. Piteously she called for "Auntie" day and night. Hour after hour the miserable Frenchman paced his room, listening and starting at every sound or babbling incoherently in his native tongue. At last they told him she must die.

"Die, die!" he shrieked, "then I am her murderer and will die, too. *Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" and before his informant could even guess his intention, the tiny poinard was drawn and plunged in his own breast. A considerable sum of money was found on his person, and he was given at least a respectable burial, but whether one befitting the last of the line of Le Grands will never be known. The widowed bride did not die. Her attendants withheld the knowledge of her husband's death until she asked for him; then told it as gently as possible.

"Monsieur dead!" she exclaimed, incredulously, then bursting into tears sobbed out:

"So I did not save him after all."

The morning sunlight touched and brightened the elegant service on the Draper breakfast table as the family lingered about it. Presently the mail was brought in, and as was his wont, the husband and father retired with his share to his study.

"A letter from Portland for you, mother," said Arthur tossing an envelope across the table, and then he took up a morning paper, ostensibly to read, but in reality to while away the time until he should learn the contents of that letter, nor had he long to wait. Throwing up her hands with a cry of horror, Mrs. Draper let fall the sheet.

"Read it Arthur, I can not. Oh something dreadful, dreadful has happened."

Snatching it up he read aloud, nor paused until the end of the terrible account in Mildred's handwriting on blotted, tear-stained pages.

"Pet, our precious child, burned alive!" cried Mrs. Draper bursting into hysterical weeping.

Without noticing her the young man threw the letter aside and locking his hands on his breast, paced the floor with white, drawn face, and eyes from which

the light seemed suddenly to have faded. Raising her head at last, the mother hushed her noisy grief at sight of the silent woe in her son's face, and rising she called his name once, twice, thrice. At the last he paused and then came and stood before her.

"Mother," he began hoarsely, his lips twitching convulsively, "I have grown old in these last few minutes; life can never be the same to me again. I could almost wish I were dead, too, since the only woman I ever loved—save yourself—has gone from earth forever. Yes, I loved Pet Browning, she filled my every thought despite the fact she was likely to marry another; and I have sometimes been so presumptuous as to think after all, in spite of everything, that she was not indifferent to me. I can not have mistaken her; but may heaven help me now. If I could have gone there in the fall something tells me I could have won her, and saved her this terrible fate."

His mother stood through the passionate harrangue like one receiving heavy blows that she could not dodge or parry, and at the last, as she detected the tone of censure mingled with the rest, she sank back in her chair.

"Arthur, Arthur!" she gasped, "I thought you were to marry Caroline Cramer."

"You thought I was to marry her!" he almost hissed. "You have known ever since you brought Pet here that I cared for no one but her, and you have fought against it by fair means and foul. You poisoned her mind against me by talking Miss Cramer to her, pretending I was to marry her. You have, at the same time, made it almost impossible for me to break with Caroline entirely; true you have not had so much to say since the nameless waif has proved to be Prof. Gettwood's heiress, but it is too late now. I will try and forget your part in blighting my life, mother, but heaven knows it is hard," and he strode into his father's study regardless of his mother's tears and protestations.

Half an hour later he came out and informed her that he would start for Portland on the morrow.

"There is some mistake. I am sure Pet is not dead. Anyway I must go and see for myself."

How changed was everything now with the little party that had lately been so joyous. Lee had taken a roomy old house in the neighborhood of their old home. Only the necessaries for eating and sleeping were purchased, and even these seemed almost superfluous as there was so little of either done by them. The sudden illness of Mrs. Mason added another burden to her son and daughter's already over-weighted hearts. The Professor—pale and silent—haunted the ruins from morning till night seeing that every bit of debris was examined, and every handful of ashes sifted.