

His one prayer now seemed to be for something recognizable, something to bury and weep over as a part of the dear mortal remains. Veeder divided his time among his stricken friends, now sharing Mildred's watch by her mother's side, now accompanying the bereaved father in his lonely, piteous, vigils, or again, seeking out the melancholy young merchant in his now dreary counting-room, and essaying to offer some word of cheer. He had suffered and could sympathize with the suffering.

As for Imogene, she studiously avoided them all, hourly growing more pale and nervous with the dread that her sin would find her out. True, both Pet and Monsieur had solemnly and repeatedly assured her that they would never betray her part in the little drama, but who could tell? Conscience conjured up no end of ways that might ruin all by the merest unintentional word, and then what punishment would the Professor deem commensurate with her crime in letting them all suffer so when a word from her would have changed everything? Such an emergency as this fire had created had not been in her plans, and how to meet it she did not know. Life was one long lie now, terrible and unbearable.

None of the family read the papers now, else they must have noticed an account of the suicide of a Frenchman, calling himself De Bar, at a certain boarding house in Eugene City, the act supposed to be the result of despondency induced by the dangerous illness of his young and beautiful wife, who, after all, was likely to survive him. Some days elapsed before they even thought to wonder if Monsieur had left the city immediately after his conversation with the Professor; or if—and then a sudden suspicion seized them—could he have fired the building for revenge? But on quiet reflection it seemed unlikely, as the fire originated above.

Mrs. Mason grew rapidly worse and soon her children saw that she too must leave them. It was the day after her funeral that Arthur Draper, entering his cousin's counting room, found him sitting dejectedly in an office chair, his head bowed on his hands. Quickly he made himself known, and then the two men stood with clasped hands looking into each other's faces through blinding tears. Arthur was inexpressibly shocked to learn of his aunt's death. Together they visited the ruins of the cottage and there met Veeder and the Professor. The latter had given over his fruitless search; but still spent hours there, nor could any of them, as yet, entertain a thought of having the debris removed. The Professor and Arthur met as old friends; but the sight of each other made their mutual grief the

worse, bringing to mind, as it did, that night, and vividly recalling the beautiful girl that had so charmed them both. The next morning, when alone with Mildred, Arthur told of his love for the missing girl.

At the declaration the former paled and asked hurriedly: "And did she care for you?"

"I do not know. I hoped, and sometimes for a little while, felt certain that she did; but mother made her believe that I was engaged to some one else."

"That, then, may have been the secret grief that wore upon her so," mused Mildred half aloud, many things coming to mind to convince her that it was so; and then she told her cousin how changed the child had been since her return from the east, and how little, apparently, she had cared for Monsieur.

"Oh, God! and now it is too late," he cried, despairingly, beginning to pace the room as was his wont when greatly agitated.

A few days later he sat in Lee's office glancing absently over a pile of dailies that lay untouched just as the office-boy had thrown them down, when a glaring head-line: "Suicide of a Frenchman at Eugene City," caught his eye, and the word Frenchman, reminding him of Monsieur, riveted his attention. Twice he read the highly embellished article through, then rose, impelled by some indefinable power, and walked rapidly



"ARTHUR, IN OBEDIENCE TO A SIGNAL FROM THE NURSE, ADVANCED SOLENNELY INTO THE ROOM."