

THOROUGHBREDS

"Have a chair," he said, motioning to the one Cass had lately sat in.

Crane did not take the other seat, but paced restlessly up and down the room; it cooled the fever of his mind.

"I hope it isn't more bad news, Mr. Crane," Allis said; for her companion seemed indisposed to break the silence.

"It is—" the girl started—"for me," Crane added, after a little pause; "and yet I am glad."

"That sounds strange," Allis commented, wonderingly.

"What I am going to say to you means the destruction of the dearest hope I have in life, but it can't be helped. Now I wouldn't have it any other way."

Suddenly he stopped in his swift pace, faced the girl, and asked, "You are quite sure you can't love me?" He was waiting for an answer.

"No, I can't—I hate to cause you misery, but I must speak the truth; you have asked for it."

"And you've answered honestly. I know it was foolish in me to ask the impossible. Just one more question and then I will tell you why I brought you here. Do you still believe in Mortimer's innocence—do you love Mortimer?"

"Yes."

"If I were to tell you that he is innocent, that I have discovered the guilty one."

"Oh, my God!" It was a cry of sudden joy, incapable of exact expression, irrelevant in its naming of the Deity, but full in its exultation of soul. Then, in quick transformation, the girl collapsed, as Cass had done, and huddled in her chair, stricken by the sudden conviction that the crime had been brought home to