

Another door and another he tried: all were fast. A second time his alarm-shout sounded:

"Help, help! For God's sake, quick, men! Help me break open the doors. They are all locked."

A crash, and then the ominous crackle of fire, and a volley of smoke rolling downwards emphasized the summons.

"Come lads!" shouted Barney to the two soldiers, who, as they saw him starting up had covered him with their pieces,—“You're not the men to stand by and let women burn in their beds, are ye?”

And he started up the broad staircase at a run, closely followed by the two brave fellows, to whose hearts his appeal had come straight home.

They were but half way up, when suddenly with a roar like a volcano, the house seemed torn from its foundations.

First it lifted, and then it settled amid horrible grindings and crashings, and after swaying some instants, it collapsed into a very crater of fire, and of belching, thunderous discharges.

Fortunately for them the appalled domestics had rushed for the door the instant it was left unguarded. But what of the other ill-fated ones amid this Gehenna of ruin?

Booming explosions resounded at intervals from beneath, and blast after blast of bursting flame and flashing fire-clouds soared aloft to the skies.

The combatants with one accord had dropped their arms, and in presence of this awful catastrophe, friends and foes mingled side by side.

The frieze-coated rebels, and the red-coat supporters of law and order stood in mute, pale horror, gazing upwards at the dread spectacle, without thought of further strife.

There is life still there somewhere, nevertheless. Hoarse cries and a woman's shrieks are faintly heard.

There is a rush round to the rear of the building.

"Help, help, for the love of Heaven!" shouts a voice from above.

All eyes are raised, and there, hanging by the blistering balcony, the lurid glare shews a man clasping to his bosom, a female form swathed in white night-robcs.

Her shower of golden hair is streaming on the fiery breath of the conflagration like a sheet of living flame; and the forked