

evitable result that he would be thrown off his balance and dashed to the ground.

At this sight Raymond's nerve almost failed him, but he rallied himself with a tremendous effort, and shouted out to Harcourt in a voice of thunder, which the trembling crowd below could hear even above the roaring of the fire, "Draw back your hand; if you lay so much as one finger on me, I leave you to your fate. Stretch your arm down by your side; do not stir an inch; obey me, or perish!"

Like an automaton the shuddering man obeyed; the clutching hand fell by his side. With terrified eyes riveted on Raymond, he waited his commands, neither speaking nor moving. He watched his rescuer step on to the window-sill beside him, and then fasten the end of the rope to a strong iron bolt, which held it securely, and rendered it a tight though slender railing from the spot where they stood. While he did this, Raymond looked down to Harcourt's feet, and saw that he wore light half boots, such as men often use for the evening.

"Kick off your boots," he said, imperiously; and Tracy, completely dominated, did as he was ordered. Then Raymond stepped back on the stone ledge, and grasping the rope with one hand, held out the other to Harcourt.

"Hold by the rope with your right hand," he said. "Grasp mine with the left, and follow me steadily, one foot before the other; both feet cannot rest on the ledge at once. Be cool, be firm, and come!"

"Oh, I dare not!" shrieked Harcourt; "I shall fall; I shall be dashed to the ground; I shall die!"

"Coward!" thundered Raymond. "Will you not more certainly die where you stand? It is your sole chance of life! You shall come!"

And by an almost superhuman effort he compelled him to mount on the ledge, and then himself moved onward, dragging Harcourt by the hand. The very extremity of his peril now made the terror-stricken man advance, his eyes closed, his feet mechanically treading in Raymond's steps, while he clung to him and to the rope, and at last in safety they reached the ladder; but the moment their hands thankfully grasped it, a terrible cry rose up to them from the men below, "The ladder has caught fire! quick! come! It will break down! We cannot hold it! Come! come!"

"Go first, Harcourt," said Raymond, drawing himself up by the hands to let his foe pass him. "Go first, and quickly, or we both are lost!"

Harcourt greedily seized the chance so generously given. He almost threw Raymond off the ladder in his anxiety to pass him, and began to descend rapidly, with his preserver following, considerably higher up. The ladder began to shake ominously. Hot blasts of flame came rushing up, and scorched their faces and hands. When Harcourt was within about ten feet of the ground he felt it give way, and sprang off, falling unhurt on the grass. But the next instant the burning ladder fell with a tremendous crash, bearing Raymond with it, from so great a height that all who saw the terrible fall believed he must infallibly be killed. There was a rush from the crowd to the spot where Raymond's motionless form lay in the midst of the burning fragments of the ladder. But before any one of them had reached it, a dark slender figure had flown, as on winged feet, to his side, and was kneeling down close to him, heedless of the flames leaping up from the broken wood that surrounded him. Hugh Carlton was among the first to follow Estelle, and finding it in vain to attempt to drag her away from Raymond, to whom she clung with a silent desperation that could not be overcome, he set the men to clear away the wreck of the ladder from around her, and then bent down by her side to ascertain whether he yet lived, whom, in her extremity of anguish, she seemed little likely to survive—if he had indeed been crushed to death in the dreadful accident which had befallen him. It was hard to say whether he still breathed. His helmet had fallen off, showing his fine face deadly white, where it was not scorched and blackened by the fire, and he was perfectly insensible, while his limbs were twisted under him in a manner which inevitably betokened most serious injury. Estelle had already loosened the coat round his chest and throat, and was supporting his head on her arm,

while the others stood helplessly round, not knowing what ought to be done, when suddenly there was a welcome cry from those on the outside of the circle, "The doctor! here is the doctor!" And so it was that the village surgeon just at this juncture came on the ground. The news of the fire had reached him in his own house, and he had at once got out his dog-cart, and driven to Carlton Hall, to offer his services if he could be of any use. His arrival was most opportune, as he at once took charge of all the arrangements, and gave his directions with energy and promptitude. He lifted Raymond out of Estelle's arms, and laid him gently down, straightening his limbs, and shaking his head as he did so.

"Does he still live?" said Estelle in a hoarse, unnatural whisper.

"I hope so, but I cannot tell. It is impossible to make any examination into his state where he lies. He must be removed at once. I can do nothing here."

The doctor turned quickly to Hugh. "We cannot risk taking him far," he continued; "the lodge would be the nearest place. Can he go there?"

"Yes, certainly," exclaimed Hugh. "The gate keeper and his wife are in the grounds. I will send them to get a bed ready at once."

He ran off for the purpose; and the doctor going towards the heap of furniture which had been saved from the house, selected a light couch that once had stood in Kathleen's boudoir, and had it brought close to Raymond, who was then lifted up with great care by some of the men, and placed upon it.

Estelle took off the cloak she wore, and laid it over the insensible form, in spite of the doctor's remonstrances. She seemed not to hear or to heed anything that was said to her; but pale and silent, resembling rather a white marble statue than a human being, she took her place at the head of the couch, and moved along close beside it as it was slowly borne away.

The doctor was following, when Jenkins, the butler, caught him by the arm. "Sir," he exclaimed, "I wish you would look to Mr. Carlton; he seems in a sad state!"

The possessor of that which had once been Carlton Hall had sunk back into a stupified condition so soon as he saw that Harcourt was safe and already standing quietly beside him.

"Where is Mrs. Carlton?" said the doctor, when he had felt his pulse.

"At Lord Vermont's, the nearest of our neighbours," said Harcourt.

"Then let Mr. Carlton be put into my dog-cart, and driven there at once. He is only overwhelmed by the shock, and requires care and quiet. Some one must go with him."

"I will," exclaimed Harcourt. "My wife is there, and I have been a good deal shaken and burnt myself."

The doctor, of course, acquiesced; but even the servants turned away in disgust at Harcourt's indifference to Raymond's fate.

To be Continued.

SHAM AND REAL LENT.

Looking at this business of Lent from an outside point of view, we are not at all sure that the approved road always leads to the desired end. We suppose the end of Lent to be, in plain English, that each human being should have one season during the year in which he should withdraw himself from his ordinary life and seek to understand more clearly the position in which he stands to God. If a man or woman is helped to do this by church-going and fasting (as no doubt he is in a majority of cases), then he is right and honest in joining in these observances. But if he gives up balls and substitutes small dinners, if he goes to church daily, and eats oysters instead of beef, simply because it is "the thing" to do from Ash Wednesday to Easter, he is only clinging more desperately than ever to the world in the very time when he should turn his back on it, and holding the most miserable of frauds and shams up between him and his God. The Saviour in His Lent did not go to the crowded synagogues or fast with His disciples from this or that article of food. He went into the wilderness and was

alone with God. There is not a man of us all endowed with ordinary sense or feeling who does not know perfectly well that he should sometimes stop, in the daily grind in house or shop or society, to take breath, to push back the hampering routine of things and people about him, so that he can look into the awful facts of the God who gave him life, the use which he is making of that life, and the death which waits beyond. Each man knows for himself how best he can make this pause, and can get furthest away from his everyday thoughts and aims. Men of business may reach this "wilderness" where God waits to speak to them, through the unaccustomed music and prayers and sermons in church; there are myriads of pious souls who mount on these as on well-trodden altar steps to their Maker's presence. A woman of society might find it more quickly in the back alley, where some of his brethren, hungry and poor, have a direct message from Him to give her; it is possible that to many a clergyman, for whom the moaning of church and hymn and sermon has become dulled through long iteration, Lent would be most real, if, like their Master, they could leave it all behind and face God somewhere with neither form nor ceremony between.

But, however we accept Lent, do not make a sham and fraud of it. Neglect it altogether, if that seems right; take some other time, unknown to any human being, to strive to come nearer to the great realities of Life and Death and God. But if we profess to use the season in all its high and awful purpose, let there be no fashionable hypocrisy about it. Fish-eating and church-going are good things in their place, and serve a reasonable purpose when kept there; but if they are substituted for the justice which a man would mete out to his own life when it is put on trial, or the genuine abasement of soul with which he should approach his Maker, they are the most perilous of frauds.

FORGIVENESS.

Frequently, in listening to the conversation of young men and maidens, this question suggests itself: Where do many of the youth of our day get their tenets of religion? Not from the bible or our pulpits, for they teach charity, mercy, and forgiveness. These beautiful qualities are scoffed at by some, and in their place self-love and resentment made tutelary divinities. Not long ago we heard a sweet young girl in appearance, one who reminds us of the poet's lines, "The rose is fairest when 'tis budding new," talking in the most enthusiastic manner on the subject of forgiveness. "She might pardon an offence, but she never forgot it; she had too much self-respect not to remember and resent an insult to her feelings."

Self-respect! that very quality should teach us the heroism of forgiveness. Vanity and selfishness cause us to harbor resentment, but self-respect should make us godlike in virtue, and, if it be necessary to resent an insult, we can heap coals of fire upon the head of the offender. Socrates, and Aristotle, who lived and died heathens, could instruct many who profess Christianity in morality and in true virtue, which forgives as it hopes to be forgiven.

The brave and thoughtful men of our country are now teaching us beautiful lessons of magnanimous forgiveness. It would be well for the youth of our country, whose narrow-minded vanity makes them forget the ennobling precepts of the Christian religion, and declare their own selfish views instead, to read, admire, and imitate those who must inspire their respect.

There is nothing so demoralizing as to frivolously ignore, and finally dishonor all that we have been taught from our youth up to regard as sacred truths. After all, only those who teach and practice the beautiful lessons of charity, and peace, and good-will towards men, are the true men and women of any age.

This is a great comfort for us to know that all the Church and congregation of Christ doth pray for us, and all the treasure of God's riches, i.e., Christ himself, the kingdom, the Holy Gospel, the sacraments, and the prayers of all goodly men, be common to us all. For whenever any goodly