

nearer the door, through which volumes of smoke were wreathing.

"I cannot leave my father. Oh, for mercy's sake, only let me give the alarm to him," cried the agonised Blanche, endeavouring to free herself from his hold, but in vain.

"You must pardon me, Miss Neville," he persisted, in a decided tone; "in a few more minutes it will be too late—your resistance is but adding to your father's danger. I will return for him when I have saved you,"—but Blanche heard him not—her head fell heavily upon his shoulder—her senses fled. In this state, he raised her in his arms, and ran down the passage leading to the back stairs, at the foot of which he paused to gain breath. He looked in the pale face of Blanche, and pressed her convulsively to his bosom, then hurried on through the terrified domestics, who were running to and fro with buckets of water. The flames had by this time fearfully increased, while the dense smoke impeding all objects from his sight, nearly suffocated him; at length he gained the glass door opening into the garden, where he met Colonel Lennox, who appeared actively engaged in giving directions to the people already collected on the spot to render assistance. Lord De Melfort consigned to his charge, the helpless Blanche, saying as he did so:

"For Heaven's sake, do not leave her for an instant, Lennox, or she will return to seek her father; I am now going back to his rescue; tell her so."

Remonstrance in such a moment was vain, for he had already disappeared within the burning house ere Colonel Lennox had time to answer him. The night air soon recalled Blanche to consciousness, when she gazed wildly around her, distractedly calling her father.

"Be composed, my dear Miss Neville," said Colonel Lennox soothingly; "De Melfort has gone to seek your father, rest assured if human efforts can avail, his will not be wanting."

"Oh, no, no, no, they will both be lost—they will both be lost!" cried Blanche, sinking on the ground, and resting her face on her knees to shut out the scene of terror. "Hark, how awfully the flames are roaring—what a moment of trial is this."

"It has passed," quickly returned Colonel Lennox, "look up, Miss Neville, and behold your father."

Blanche sprang to her feet—the agitated minister, his white hair floating in the night breeze, was seen approaching hastily towards her; she tottered forward and fell into his arms, exclaiming:

"Oh, my own dear papa—thank God, thank God. Now let the flames rage on, I care not—but where is Lord De Melfort?" she added, looking round; "ah, Heaven, is he not with you?"

"Merciful God, where is De Melfort?" repeated Colonel Lennox, rushing towards the house.

"I have not seen him," returned Mr. Neville,

tremulously. "I was awoke by the cry of fire—I flew into your room, and found you gone, they told me my noble young friend had borne you thither."

"Alas, he went back to seek you—all gracious God, spare him, spare him, and I will eternally offer praise," cried Blanche, casting herself on her knees. At the same instant, a great portion of the roof fell in with a violent crash, followed by loud screams, all who were within rushed forth, while Blanche overcame with the intensity of her feelings sank with her face to the earth. From this position she was gently raised, and unclosing her eyes they met the anxious gaze of Lord De Melfort, who supported her. What a sudden revulsion now took place within her. One cry of joy burst from her lips, as she eagerly clasped his hand in hers with the affection of a sister. He smiled, then giving her to her father's care, said to him:

"We had better not linger here, my dear sir, I have given ample instructions to my own people to guard your property. My carriage waits, and will convey you both to Woodland, where you must do me the favour to sojourn while it suits you."

Mr. Neville, confused, bewildered, and agitated by his sudden misfortune, could only express his deep sense of his lordship's kindness. He cast a lingering look on his home, now a heap of ruins, and softly sighing, he led his daughter away; Lord De Melfort assisting to support her, followed by Colonel Lennox. They all entered the carriage, which immediately drove off at a rapid rate, Newton receiving orders to follow with the rest of the Rector's domestics, as soon as possible.

During their short drive, Blanche sat with her head reclining on the bosom of her father, her hand locked in his, while a few natural tears were stealing down her cheeks; but she had too much cause for gratitude to give way to vain regrets, now that the most beloved were near her and in safety. Mr. Neville had been taken by surprise, nor could he yet know to what extent he might be a sufferer; but the constant state of preparation in which he lived, kept him (after the first shock was over) from yielding to uneasy thoughts.

"I have trusted thee, oh, God, with my soul," mentally said the pious man, "and shall I not trust thee with all things else which are of so much less importance; do, therefore, what seemeth good in thy sight, and teach me to bow in all humility to thy divine will, and to exclaim with the Christian poet:

"Oh, thou bounteous giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown,  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Mrs. Gibson, the worthy house-keeper, had been duly warned to expect her guests, and received the fatigued and still agitated Blanche, as she entered