

BARRIERS BURNED AWAY.

By Rev. E. P. Roe.

(Continued.)

"How is it?" she said with a bewildered air, "I do not understand. The last I remember, we were surrounded by fire, you were despairing, and it seemed that I died."

"You fainted, Miss Ludolph. But God as by a miracle brought us out of the fiery furnace, and for the present we are safe." After she had sufficiently rallied from her excessive exhaustion and terror, he told her how they had escaped.

"I see no God in it all," she said, "only a most fortunate opportunity of which you, with great nerve and presence of mind, availed yourself. To you alone, again and again this dreadful night, I owe my life."

"God uses us as His instruments to do His will. The light will come to you by-and-by, and you will learn a better wisdom."

"In this awful conflagration the light has come. On every side I see as in letters of fire, 'There is no God.' If it were otherwise these scenes would be impossible. And any being permitting or causing the evils and crimes this dreadful night has witnessed, I should fear and hate beyond the power of language to express."

She uttered these words sitting on the sands with multitudes of others, her face (from which Dennis had washed the dust and smoke) looking in the glare so wan and white that he feared, with a sickening dread, that through exposure, terror, or some of the many dangers by which they were surrounded, she might pass into the future world with all her unbelief and spiritual darkness. He yearned over her with a solicitude and pity that he could not express. She seemed so near—indeed he could feel her form tremble, as he knelt beside her, and supported her by his arm—and yet in view of her faithless state, how widely were they separated! Should any one of the many perils about them quench the little candle of her life, which even now flickered faintly, where in the wide universe could he hope to meet her again? God can no doubt console and make up every loss to His children, but the passionate heart, with its intense human love, clings to its idol none the less.

Dennis saw that the fire would probably

hem them in on the beach the remainder of the night, and the following day. He determined therefore in every way possible to beguile the weary, perilous hours, and, if she would permit it, to lead her thoughts heavenward. Hence arose from time to time religious conversations, to which, with joy, he found Christine no longer averse. Indeed she often introduced them.

Chafing her hands he said in the accents of the deepest sympathy:

"How I pity you, Miss Ludolph. It must indeed be terrible to possess your thoughtful mind—to realize these scenes so keenly, and yet have no faith in a Divine Friend. I cannot explain to you the mystery of evil—why it came, or why it exists. Who can? I am but one of God's little children, and only know with certainty that my Heavenly Father loves and will take care of me."

"How do you know it?" she asked eagerly.

"In several ways. Mainly because I feel it."

"It all seems so vague and unreal," she sighed dreamily. "There is nothing certain, assured. There is no test by which I can at once know the truth."

"That does not prevent the truth from existing. Because some are blind is no proof the color does not exist."

"But how can you be sure there is a God? you never saw Him."

"I do not see the heat that scorches us, but I feel it, and know it exists."

"But I feel the heat the same as yourself, but I have no consciousness of a Divine Being."

"That does not take away my consciousness that He is my Saviour and friend! As yet you are spiritually dead. If you were physically dead, you would not feel the heat of this fire."

"Oh, it is all mystery—darkness," she cried piteously.

The sun had now risen quite above the waters of the lake, but seen through the lurid smoke swept over its face, it seemed like one of the great red cinders that were continually sailing over their heads. In the frightful