

are nearing a ladder, and gallant men are mounting to lend him a helping hand with his precious load.

But ha! What cry is that?—a scream as of a wounded panther; an inarticulate cry, full of horror, of warning, of menace, of despair?

A shot! And the youth in turn echoes the piercing shriek, reels, and falls: only on his knees and elbows though! But the figure, hitherto motionless on his back, flings up its hands wildly to the fiery heavens.

Good God! Is murder abroad too, mingling with the horrors of the night?

“Help! help! Seize the murderer!”

It is Harvey’s voice that rings out anew; and it is Harvey’s fire-scathed form that crashes through the crystal walls at a bound. And there follow the whirl and the rush of men in a hand-to-hand conflict, a storm of imprecations, demon-forms glancing to and fro, and closing in the death-grapple.

Hell seems broken loose beneath the affrighted youth, who can do no more now but cling on to his frail swaying support. The hot breath of the fire is a few yards only behind him. The hot blood from the lifeless form above him is trickling down his neck, and mingling in a purple stream with his own. Murder is leaping at him from below. A vertigo seizes him. Everything is whirling round. But he still instinctively keeps his hold. He must hang on for life,—dear life,—a life dearer than his own!

A roar of rage from the multitude rouses his fainting senses. What has happened?

The struggle is over beneath his feet. It has lasted probably only a few seconds: it seems a lifetime to him. He marks a stream of dim figures dashing off into the darkness, and two flying phantoms ahead.

And yonder is a female form sweeping onwards on a white horse, like Death in the Revelations; and she catches up the foremost fugitive, and in an instant the vision is swallowed up in the darkness.

So he rallies once more, and recommences his weary labour. Ah, happy if it be not all useless now!

They were kind hands that seized hold of the spent stripling, and the precious burden he had borne so well. Gently they lower them down, both alike helpless now.