

"So am I; thank Heaven!"

Rivers commenced to kick out, and succeeded in placing his oar beside the boat.

"Stop," said the Doctor, "till I help you up."

He reached down his hand, but by some unaccountable accident his feet slipped down at the same time and struck the oar upon which Charles was leaning, the oar sank and slipped away from him, and Rivers once more went to the bottom like a stone.

"Gone at last!" muttered Dr. Bland between his teeth, "his love-making is ended."

But the good Doctor like many other worthy men was premature in his remark. Charles Rivers was not gone, he had sunk deep enough to be sure, but came up all right on the opposite side of the boat from that on which he went down. Rivers if he was no swimmer was a good climber, and could shin up anything; he got hold of the bow, reached the keel, and as the Doctor who had slipped down was climbing up on one side, Charles was doing the same on the other. The Doctor was too much absorbed with his own thoughts to notice the hands placed on the keel above him. Charles was up first, and astride of the keel before the Doctor noticed him.

"Well, Doctor, all right again you see."

The Doctor started and looked up; if he had seen a ghost he would not have looked more astonished. "Why" he stammered as soon as he could speak, "I thought you were gone."

"No, thank you, not quite; very near it though, it's very awkward that I should have got that second dip."

"My dear friend, I was so much horrified that I have scarcely been able to move since. I should have dived for you, though I'm but a poor swimmer."

"I'm glad I saved you the trouble."

By this time the position of the boat had been seen from the shore, and boats were on the way to rescue them from their perilous position.

When they were taken off the combined effects of wet and cold had made them so stiff that they could scarcely move, and neither was in a proper humor for much talking. A change of clothes and a good stiff glass of hot whiskey however, restored them to their usual spirits; and neither appeared much the worse for the trial they had passed through.

When Edward Bland heard of the danger to which they had been exposed, his joy at their escape was extreme. He declared their boating should end forthwith, although Dr. Bland maintained that it was nothing,—a mere ducking and no more.

"One that came near costing me my life," said Charles.

"But how did you get out of danger so quickly?" asked Edward Bland of the Doctor.

"Oh, I wore a life-preserver. I always do when I go boating, and of course did not sink."

"A wise precaution I should say," said

Charles; "in future I shall do the same."

That evening in a diary kept by a certain individual the following words were written in secret cypher:—

"He bears a charmed life. Four times he has escaped me. The next time I will make sure. I have no hope of her love, but I will have my revenge. The minister shall never join 'er lands!"

Does the reader desire to know the man that wrote this? It was DR. BLAND!

Yes, Dr. Bland the meek, the charitable, the pious, the man of exemplary character was Dr. Bland the assassin also. Dr. Bland was a hypocrite and a knave, but he was worse, for his hypocrisy was that of a demon, and his knavery meant murder.

Happily for man there are few men of his stamp in this world. Humanity is bad enough and frail enough, but it never produced one like him. Nothing but a diabolical nature could ever have produced such baseness.

And there sat Dr. Bland side by side, with the man he had four times tried to murder; side by side with a brother, who was truth and honor itself; and who believed his brother possessed the same qualities of mind as he did himself. But we have not time to moralize; the character which Macaulay gives of Barere might well have been applied to Dr. Bland.

Charles Rivers had but little inclination to remain on the sea coast after this accident. In two days, time, accordingly, the whole party started for home.

Rivers had completely recovered his strength, and felt himself prepared to begin his professional duties once more with renewed diligence.

His first care in returning home was to see Alice; and their meeting was indeed a happy one.

"Oh, Charles you were so near being drowned it almost makes me shudder to think of it! How is it you have been exposed of late to so much danger?"

"O! I suppose it is destiny."

"Then destiny is very unkind."

"I am all right now. Never mind the past; but I hope no one will make a target of me to-night."

"I am sure, I hope not; I pray for you every night. Charles, do you ever pray?"

Rivers made no answer; but the question stung him to the heart. That night at least he prayed. Let us hope that he continued to do so.

Ellen continued: "It seems strange that any man should be so determined to take your life. You who have never wronged any one. Do you suspect any person?"

"No."

"Do you know of having made an enemy of any one?"

"None that I am aware of."

"I ask these questions because a curious circumstance happened which I did not care to tell you of before. Ellen and I were walking over the spot where you were shot at, next day, and