

must, for an instant, compose himself before he could proceed further without betraying himself by his emotions.

He said hurriedly, "I will bring in some cakes," and immediately left the room. How ardently he wished that Rivers might take one sip of the wine before he returned,—only one that would leave a gulf as wide and deep as Eternity between them!

The table on which the wine was placed was one which Dr. Bland had arranged for himself to read at. When he wished in the course of his reading to consult various books, and for greater convenience, it moved on a pivot in the centre, and could be turned with ease.

Rivers had often noted the peculiar mechanism of this table, and as Dr. Bland was absent for some moments he amused himself by spinning it around on its pivot, thinking as he did so, perhaps, of the late event in his life, or possibly musing on some knotty law point, or quite as likely not thinking of anything in particular.

By the time he had got tired of turning the table, the poisoned glass of wine rested opposite Dr. Bland's own seat. An accident equally trifling frequently spoils the plans of much more astute men than even the astute and wily assassin.

Dr. Bland having recovered from his sudden weakness returned with a plate of cakes in his hand, and found Rivers still alive and the wine untouched. He excused himself for his delay, and sat down opposite Charles. He had acquired such absolute possession of all his faculties, that the most careful observer could not have detected a single trace of emotion either in his countenance, or his manner. He raised the glass without his hand trembling in the slightest degree, at the same time watching Rivers who placed his glass at the same moment to his lips—and in another moment Rivers was horrified to see Dr. Bland stretched on the floor a corpse! The first impulse of Rivers was to raise the dead man from the floor, for he at first supposed he had only fainted, but finding that life was gone, he ran to find some of the domestics. None were there, for Dr. Bland had given them all a fortnight's holiday, that he might carry out his plan of assassination the more readily. Rivers returned to the room where the dead man was, and lifted the glass which had fallen from his hand. It had an odor of something stronger and decidedly different from port wine, and in an instant the first dawning of the true state of the case burst upon his mind. The mystery which hung over past events was removed,—the veil which concealed his undiscovered enemy from him was torn away in the corpse before him. He knew the man who had repeatedly sought his life, and who but for a mere accident would have accomplished his purpose then.

Charles Rivers mounted his horse and galloped to the nearest house, telling its inmates of the death of Dr. Bland, and bidding them send

at once for the coroner. He then hastened at an equally furious pace towards Mr. Alton's, and told them the strange news. In a short time the whole neighbourhood was aroused, and numbers of people were hastening towards the place where the dead man was. So powerful is curiosity that it overcomes the natural repugnance that we feel to gaze on the pallid faces of the dead, and reconciles us to the contemplation of the most repulsive forms of mortality.

It is unnecessary to describe how much every one, especially those best acquainted with the deceased, was shocked at his sudden fate. His brother was placed in an agony of grief, and gazed on the pale face of the dead man with feelings which only a brother can experience. He was, however, forced from the spot on which he appeared to be rivetted, for the coroner was in the room, and before the corpse could be removed it was necessary for the inquest to be held. The result of the inquest fully justified the sagacity of Dr. Bland and his estimate of the surgical knowledge of the medical men in the neighbourhood, for when the result of their investigations was laid before the jury a verdict was returned that he died by the visitation of God.

And here our tale may rest, for there is little to add to what has already been told. Charles Rivers, like an honest true hearted man, kept the dreadful secret in his own breast, or if he breathed it to any human being, he trusted it only to the one who should be the confidante of every man in such matters,—his wife. To have given it further publicity, would only have resulted in breaking the heart of Dr. Bland's noble hearted and excellent brother Edward, who, after a reasonable time had elapsed, was married to Ellen Foster. He, of course, succeeded to all his brother's property.

Dr. Bland was missed by no one more than by the excellent Mrs. Alton who lamented him to the last hour of her life, and spoke of him in terms which a saint might envy. Little the proud woman knew the real character of the man whose tinsel of assumed godliness shone so brightly. But to have undeceived her would have been an unprofitable and unnecessary task. It is better to live and die in ignorance than to acquire knowledge at the expense of all faith in human honesty, and all confidence in human virtue. No one is more to be pitied than the generous open-hearted man who begins life by trusting in all men, and taking them for gold; and who ends it by believing in no man's honesty, and regarding all men as knaves and hypocrites in disguise, and their show of worth as the merest tinsel.

SWISS TELEGRAPHS.—A most important feature in the Swiss telegraphic system, is the arrangement between the postal and telegraphic authorities, by which money orders may be sent by telegraph, instead of by post.—*Times*.