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## Dangers of Dining Out.

BY MRS. KILLIS.

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At the same time, in the apartment of Lady Mornford, nothing was heard but hysterical sobbings, while her terrified attendants applied those stimulants, and restoratives, to which she was but too much accustomed.

"These things," said Frederick Bond, awakening from his reverie, "are the stern realities of life. Upon this exquisite being, whom time has passed by without daring to touch, disease has laid his fatal and polluting hand."

Unnerved as he was, and perfectly alive to images of horror, the subject assumed a more frightful character than he could bear to contemplate. He was faint and feeble with the excesses of the past day, and a habit, for the consequences of which he felt no apprehension, had lately enabled him to find the stimulus for which he felt so frequent a craving, close at hand, and safe under lock and key in his own apartment.

It had been the subject of observation with some of Frederick's more serious friends, before he married, that he was in danger of being led away by what is called a fondness for convivial meetings; but no sooner was that auspicious event announced, than he was considered a safe man for all his future life. No single individual, except himself, could be aware to what degree his fondness had extended. Each of his friends beheld him only at particular times under the influence of wine; but he knew, or might have known, if he would have acknowledged it to himself, that the sum total of his exercise was at least double what any one else suspected.

Nor was it at the dinner-table alone, that temptation assailed him. He was a great favourite with the country people, amongst whom much of his practice lay; and there were cold stormy rides often to be performed in the night, which seemed to demand, as a mere act of common hospitality, that he should be fortified against the inclemency of the weather by some potent draught.

There were long visits, too, which must of necessity be paid, to places distant and dreary, where he, and the good man of the house, would while away the weary hours, by filling their glasses again, and again, till they scarcely heard the pelting of the storm, or knew that there was any thing on earth beyond the blazing fire, and half empty bottle beside him.

In each of these instances, the partaker in Frederick Bond's conviviality, believed the excess of that particular occasion to be an exception to his general rule of conduct, and thus his character remained unblemished as a whole.

It is wonderful how the silence of the world can lull the conscience to sleep. It is equally wonderful how the reproaches of the world can at once awaken it to more than life. In none of the vices to which human nature is liable, is this more evident than in the vice of intemperance. If every separate act of inebriety which a man commits, was, from the earliest commencement, known and treated justly by society, he would be defended by a host of witnesses. But, unfortunately, it is only when he has gone too far, when conviction has lost the power to save him, though it still retains the power to strike, that the word speaks home, and treats him, in this hopeless stage of degradation, as it ought to have treated him at first.

Frederick Bond had gone farther than he himself was aware of, for he had entered upon the fatal practice of drinking in secrecy and alone. He had often wished, as he sat in his study, a prey to that nervous debility consequent upon excess, that he could obtain, without being observed, the stimulus which both mind and body seemed to crave; and one Sunday afternoon, when all the rest of the household were gone to church, he employed himself in conveying from his cellar to his study, a sufficient supply to last him for some weeks.

We will not say how little of the dignity of a man or a Chris-

tian he felt, while engaged in this occupation. The certainty that no eye beheld him—that most fatal, and most delusive opiate, by which the human soul is drugged—the certainty that no eye beheld him, gave strength to his purpose at the time, and culminated to his after-recollections of what he had done.

It was not many weeks after the meeting of the party already described, that Sir James Mornford invited the same guests to dine at his own house. Eleanor received the intelligence that her husband intended to accept this invitation, like some sudden shock which left her scarcely power to speak. She felt herself trembling all over, when she returned the note to her husband without a word, for she was so often told that her scruples on this subject arose entirely from her ignorance of the world, that she determined to be silent, nor was it any real apprehension for the future that now disturbed her peace, but simply a sort of instinctive dread of witnessing what she considered, as the degradation of the being she most admired on earth. Of his finally, and totally yielding to any gross or vicious propensity, she entertained not the shadow of a fear.

On the morning of the day when this visit was to be paid, Eleanor was even more than usually attentive to her husband's wants and wishes, and when he came home to dress for the party, she lingered about him as if his every word and look was to be the last.

It was quite natural that, under such circumstances, he should feel a little annoyed by her attentions, and he was, consequently, more silent, and more abrupt when he did speak, than usual. He was glad to hasten through the duties of his toilet, and when all was completed, he took leave of his wife so slightly, and so coldly, that she bailed him back again on some trivial pretext, and folding her arms around his neck, burst into tears.

"What can be the matter with you Eleanor?" he said, "I am in haste, you must let me go."

She still detained him, however, until she had whispered in his ear her earnest request that he would return home early.

"I am not well," she added, "and I shall be so nervous."

"You are a foolish creature," he answered, rather contemptuously, and, forcing her arms from their hold, "Come, come, Eleanor," he said, "Don't make such a child of yourself. I must go, I shall be too late."

With that he pressed a hasty kiss upon her forehead, and was gone in a moment, stopping only on the stairs to say in a loud and hurried voice, "You had better go to rest at the usual time; Saunders will let me in."

It was a long and gloomy day to Eleanor, the more so, that she dreaded having incurred her husband's displeasure and contempt, by giving way to the feelings of her heart; and she resolved again, and again, to be wiser for the future, and to keep her anxieties and fears to herself.

The evening came, and she was weary of her work, and yet feared to go, as she often did, to sit with her mother and sisters, lest they should discover where her husband was going; for strange stories having got abroad about the scenes which took place on the occasion of Sir James Mornford dining with her husband, had induced her father to caution him, rather severely, against too intimate an association with that gentleman.

These considerations detained her in her silent home, where the hours dragged so heavily along, that more than once she bent her ear to the time-piece, to ascertain whether it had really stopped. It had, after much watching, reached the eleventh hour, when Eleanor was startled by a thundering knock at the door, and the footman hastened up stairs to say that a man from the country had come for Mr. Bond to go immediately, his child having been seized with the croup, and lying, as he believed, at the point of death.

"Send him to Mr. West," said Eleanor. The man galloped down the street, and the houses were not so distant, but that Eleanor, by opening the window, could hear