

brought down with sorrow to the grave, by this ungrateful son. It is reported of the old man, that he sits up night after night, working at his desk, in order to keep a situation for his son, which his own infirmities have long since rendered him unequal to. And yet this young man—this Ralph Kennedy, is so idle and unsteady, as to be wholly unfit to succeed his poor father in a place of trust."

Before the conversation had reached this point, the sun had sunk below the horizon, the sands instantaneously assumed a dark gray hue; and ere the harvest moon, which the next hour rose, had shed her silver light over the woods and the fields sloping down to the tranquil bay, the tide had so far receded, that nothing could be seen of the ocean, but a long line of deep blue, stretching away into the distant west.

Miss Falkland prepared to lead her visiter into the house; when, rising from his seat, he observed, for the first time, that a quiet-looking young girl, apparently about eighteen, and dressed in white, had been their companion on the balcony; and with a sort of instinctive curiosity, he directed an inquiring look to Miss Falkland which seemed to say, "Whom have we here?"

"It is only my cousin, Grace Dalton," said Miss Falkland, understanding him perfectly.

Seeing the girl did not attempt to rise, the old gentleman still lingered. "Won't you catch cold my dear?" said he, with familiar, but well-meant kindness with which old gentlemen are apt to address those who are between girls and women.

Grace Dalton rose, and thanked him respectfully, but immediately resumed her seat; and the door was closed upon the lighted room, and she was left to her evening meditations, and forgotten. Indeed it was very easy to forget Grace Dalton; she was so small and so still. She was an orphan, too, and very poor; but surely it is not possible, in such a kind world as ours professes to be, that these two facts should constitute any reason why persons are more easily forgotten. Oh no! It was because Grace Dalton, as we said before, was diminutive in her person, simple in her dress, timid, gentle, unobtrusive, and not remarkably pretty, that she was so often, and so easily forgotten; and though she was a poor relation, and always came last into the room, and looked so humble, that she might have almost claimed pity from a stranger, it frequently fell to her lot to find no room left for her at table.—Whether intentionally, or by accident, the servants used to omit to place her chair; and when she did not actually appear, nobody remembered her existence sufficiently to calculate upon her coming.

Yet for all this, the humble and isolated orphan had her own little world of interest, in which she lived, perhaps, a life of deeper feeling, because it was so seldom shared with others. What was the reason why she sat out so late this evening, no one asked, nor would they, perhaps, have felt more curious, had they seen the tears that were fast falling from her eyes, as she bent over the balcony, with her forehead resting on her arm. Perhaps it was something in the conversation which had pained her, for she was strongly attached to her cousin George, and often ventured to take his part, even when he was most in fault. She could not be made to see the desperate nature of Ralph Kennedy's principles; at least, she never joined in what her cousin Julia said against him; and thus she fell a little into disgrace, both with the mother, and the daughter.

Leaving this solitary girl to her uninterrupted meditations, we turn to a different scene, which at the same hour was taking place; where, seated around a social board, a little company of choice spirits, with George Falkland at their head, laughed away the last hours of daylight, and hailed the lamps that seemed to dance before them as brighter harbingers of a happier and more joyous night.

George Falkland had that day left his mother's house in company with his friend, Ralph Kennedy, who was in great request at all the convivial meetings in the neighbourhood, not only for his musical talents, but his unrivalled good spirits, and good humour, which, without exciting any deep interest, made him a welcome guest wherever he went. It is true, he seldom went away from these meetings in a state very creditable to himself—it is true, he made his own gratification the sole object for which he lived—it is true, he left an aged father to toil for his support, because, he had too much of what is called spirit to devote himself to any kind of regular pursuit. Yet notwithstanding all this, he managed to keep what is considered good society; and to maintain for himself the character of being a "good fellow"—"his own enemy," it was granted; but still he was accounted the enemy of no one else, and the best companion in the world.

It may be supposed, that such a character would often be deficient in those means by which the appearance of a gentleman is supported, while Falkland being ever ready to supply this deficiency, they became inseparable friends; and perhaps did, in reality, like each other as well as such characters are capable of liking anything beyond themselves.

On the night described, they had staid late, and the moon had risen high before either of them thought of returning home. At last, when Kennedy had sung his best song, Falkland rose from the table; for no one cared after that to hear an inferior voice.

"Come, come," said Falkland, laying his hand upon the shoulder of his friend, "it will take us a full hour to ride home, and we had better have the benefit of the moon over the sands; for I fancy neither you nor I see so steadily as we did this morning.

"Sands!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices at once, "You won't go by the sands to-night."

"Won't I though?" said Kennedy, rising and immediately joining his friend; while both supported the dispute, until it ended in a bet, which appeared to render the enterprise of going by the sands, altogether much more attractive.

The two friends then mounted their horses, and set off merrily, taking the road which led immediately down to the beach. It was a beautiful night. A breeze had sprung up from the sea, and a few distant dark clouds came floating along with it towards the moon; but still she rode high in the heavens, and her light was almost like that of day.

It was a beautiful night, and many were the lively jests with which the travellers amused themselves by the way; for Kennedy, though scarcely able to keep his balance on his horse, had often, when in that situation a spirit of drollery about him, more amusing than in his sober moments, to those who cared not from what source it came. All his odd movements, all the strange accidents which happened to him under such circumstances, he could turn to jest; and the laughter and merriment with which they now pursued their way towards the sands, startled from behind the shadow of a rock, an old fisherman, who was watching his nets.

They had passed him by with a slight good-night, when Falkland wheeled round his horse, and asked him how long it would be before the tide would be up, and if they had time enough to reach the second headland which jutted out into the sands.

"Time enough," said the old man, "if your horses are good. The tide won't be up to the crags yonder, for half an hour yet." And he pointed to a heap of black rock, at some distance out to sea.

The travellers now set spurs to their horses, not so much from any fear of the tide, as from the mere hilarity of their own spirits, which could not be satisfied with any sober pace. Capable, however, as Kennedy had been of keeping his seat under more favourable circumstances, he fell from the horse the moment it struck into a gallop; and whether from the violence of the fall, or the novel position in which he found himself, he became so bewildered and confused, as to be long before he could regain his seat. Even then he rode with his head sometimes bent over the neck of the horse, and sometimes thrown back, while the loss of his hat, and other accidents, occasioned both laughter and delay. To increase their difficulties, a dark cloud now spread over the moon, so that they lost sight for a time of the high land, which terminating in a rocky ridge, stretched far into the bay, and formed a point, which they must pass before they could even reach the stream where the passage was accounted most dangerous.

Still their horses were safe, and well accustomed to the road; and as danger was the last thing that either of them would have dreamed of at that moment, they only rode more leisurely, altogether unconscious of the time they had lost by the way.

"I wish that cloud would pass," said Falkland, at last. "I cannot see the crags at this point, whatever I would do. And there is a kind of rushing in my ears, as if the tide was coming up; but that is impossible, for the old man said it would be more than half an hour before it reached the crags, and they are a mile off at least."

The cloud did pass; and—was it the moon-light that lay so white before them on the sand? No: it was the tide running up in long sheets of hissing foam, each one stealing farther than the last.

"Set spurs to your horse," cried Falkland, "and ride, Kennedy, ride, for your life!"

He did so, and down he fell again upon the sand; and the foam curled up and around him, and then retreated, while he mounted again to make another fruitless attempt at greater speed.