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CONTENTS.

The Rising Tide.—Concluded.

Rehabilitation.—An address delivered before the Brethren of the "Spring of Canada Tent," by the Rev. W. T. Leach, of Montreal, and published at their request.

Working Men.—Peculiarly adapted for the perusal of the members of Temperance Societies in Canada.

MISCELLANEOUS.—Always deserving of a careful perusal but peculiarly so this time.

POETRY.—*The Broken Pledge.*—Touching on a peculiarly delicate question.

EDITORIAL.—*Objections to a Christian's joining a Temperance Society.*—Concluded.
Rehabilitation.

EDUCATION.—*A Mother's Influence.*—This is one of the best articles on the subject that we have ever seen; we earnestly request mothers to read it

Family Government.—Also highly important.

Mary Lundie Duncan.—Continued.

AGRICULTURE.—*Drainage.*—*Large Farms.*—*Cruelty to Birds.*
News, Price Current, Money List, Advertisements, &c.

THE RISING TIDE.

BY MRS. ELLIS.

(Concluded from Page 227.)

"Is all ready, child?" said the old man, in a voice at once so gentle and subdued, that Grace was encouraged to approach nearer; and after answering his question, she bent her head upon the coffin, and gave way to her tears.

It was the hour of final separation. Both felt it to be so; and the old man sat at the head of the coffin, his hands clasped together, as if their firmly-knit grasp gave him strength to bear his affliction; while the gentler form of the orphan girl was bowed as if with mortal anguish. And there she wept, as if her heart was breaking; and the father was too deeply wrapped in thought to ask what right she had to grieve. Sad and solemn were the moments which the two mourners thus spent together. They were too soon interrupted; and old Kennedy rose from his chair to meet the strangers who came to perform their appointed office. He rose from his chair, and motioned for them to proceed with their duty; but his knees shook beneath him, and he dashed his hand across his brow as if to clear his vision, or to sweep away some image that still lingered before his sight. He soon recovered himself, however, and with no arm to lean upon, no near relative to wear so much as the outward garb of woe, he walked after the coffin to the place of burial, and stood with his head uncovered during the solemn service beside the last home of his only child.

There were many there who pitied the lonely father; many who would willingly have followed him to his desolate home, and shown him the common sympathy of neighbours and friends; but his manner drew no one near him, and he had failed, either intentionally or inadvertently, to request that any invitations should be given to his house. He therefore returned from the grave as he had gone—alone; and walking directly to his own door, entered his chamber without exchanging a single word with any individual. Even Grace had now no plea for remaining; and he

passed her hastily when by chance they met, that she could not but understand his wish to be left entirely alone.

The next day, however, she found, or made, an excuse for calling at the house; and not having been able to accomplish this before the evening, she was agreeably surprised to find that her appearance had not only been expected, but wished for.

"I thought you long in coming," said old Kennedy, perhaps unconscious himself how much he was the creature of habit, and how the quiet step, and gentle voice, and willing hand of Grace Dalton had in reality won upon his heart.

Simple as were these few words, they had a powerful effect upon the orphan girl, who felt that a way was now opened for the kindness she had found it so difficult to express. Nor did she, as many would have done, defeat her own purpose by expressing too much. She even went away that evening at an early hour, and evidently before the old man was expecting to hear her kind good-night.

The next morning Grace was the bearer of a present from her aunt; and so she went on, stealing upon the heart of the solitary, until he began to converse with her perhaps more freely than he had done with any one for many years of his life. Grace had observed, that for some time he had been busily arranging his books and papers; she had observed also, that he was always at home; and she was not surprised to learn that he had resigned the situation, which, but for the sake of his son, he would never have held so long.

"My wants will now be so few," he said, "that it would ill repay me to be spending the little time that is left me on this side the grave, in toiling for myself."

Yet how to pass the time when no longer stimulated to exertion, was to him a far greater difficulty than he had apprehended; and, like many others similarly circumstanced, the lengthened hours of his aimless existence were often filled with murmuring and discontent. Even common kindness, from whatever hand it came, with the exception of that of Grace Dalton, was scarcely received with gratitude.

"I cannot tell," said he to Grace one day, "why Mrs. Falkland thinks I have more relish for dainties since the death of my son than I had before. She never sent me those delicacies when he was living, and might have shared them with me."

"It is the only means she has of showing you her kind feeling," observed Grace.

"And why does she wish to show it? Is it not enough to feel kindly, without telling others that you do so?"

"But you know, dear sir, that sympathy is nothing, if locked within one's own bosom."

"Don't talk to me of sympathy. I am weary of the word. I suppose they call it sympathy when they come here and talk to me with long faces and fine-spun words; and before they have gone fifty yards from the house, I hear them laughing on the other side of the hedge. No, no, child, I know what sorrow is. I have seen a good deal of it in my time; and I know it is what few people feel much of, except for themselves. Perhaps I ought hardly to say so either, for I remember how you wept on the day my poor boy was buried, and that could not have been for yourself—for what was he to you? Ah! my child, I remember those tears. They were more to me than volumes of fine words."

It was not always, however, that Kennedy spoke thus to Grace; He was sometimes harsh even to her, for it was his nature to be so, and those who speak of great afflictions, or even of great events of any kind, wholly changing the tone and bias of natural feeling, know little of that nature of which they speak. There is but one change from which we have a right to anticipate any radical or lasting result, and even that leaves the same tone and bias to be striven against so long as life remains.