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THE RISING TIDE.

BY MRS. ELLIS.

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The life of the gay man is, in fact, a system of self-indulgence, of self gratifications, of self-worship. The miser, in his dispised and isolated sphere, has no power to prey upon the happiness of society. The privations he imposes, extend no farther than himself; and, if no other individual shares in what he gains, he is alone in the punishment he inflicts. But the dissipated man has a wider influence, because he is the hero of society in its worst state. He has therefore the power to disseminate the seeds of evil in a degree proportioned to his popularity; and in the same measure as he is beloved, he is capable of inflicting misery. He knows that he can do this, and he does it still. He knows that he is the cause of floods of burning tears, and while he weighs them against one intoxicating draught, it is self-love that prompts him again to hold the sparkling poison to his lips, and to let the tears flow on.

But to return to our story. The father of Ralph Kennedy saw, from the point of land on which he stood, that three or four fishermen were gathered together on one particular part of the sand, and he knew from the number of persons who hastened towards the spot, that they had found the body of his lost son. It was not in his nature to connect himself with a crowd, especially on such an occasion. He therefore returned, silently and alone, to his own dwelling, where he gave the necessary directions to his only domestic, and then shut the door of his chamber, and listened for the footsteps of those who should bring home the dead. They were long in coming; and the servant had time to make ready a little parlour, considered more particularly as her master's own apartment, for it was here he used to keep his books, and here he used to sit through the midnight hours, waiting and watching for his son's return, it having been his custom never to allow any other person to be disturbed by his late hours.

While these preparations were going forward, Grace Dalton walked silently home with her aunt and cousins; when, on passing a cottage at the outskirts of the village, it suddenly occurred to her that help might be wanted in the house of mourning, and, stopping back a few paces, she entered the dwelling of a poor woman who was in the habit of attending on such occasions.

Like most persons in her situation of life, the woman began immediately to descant upon the character of the deceased, adding her present testimony to her past forebodings, that it "would come to this." She always "knew it would come to this." With many wise and moral observations, which Grace considered rather ill-timed, and therefore reminded her that the unconscious object of her remarks was now dead, and it became all who were left, to forget and forgive.

"As to forgiving," said the woman, "I don't know that there's much of that needed, unless it is the injury done to my poor boy, who has never been the same since that young man came to our house; for what with his jokes, and his songs, and his good-humoured laugh, and"—

"He used to come here, did he?" asked Grace, with a sudden glow of colour in her cheek, to which it had long been a stranger.

"Oh? yes, Mrs. He would sit here evening after evening, when our Ann was at home; and the poor girl takes on so. I am sure if he had been our equal, we could none of us have been more sorry; for he never seemed above being one of us, as I said before when Ann was at home."

Poor Grace! She thought she had suffered enough before; and now this woman was unconsciously mixing drops of bitterness with the draught which she had not yet begun to feel was one of healing. And thus it must ever be with those who associate themselves in their affections with what is contrary to the nature of virtue and religion. It is not vice alone which, under such circumstances, must appal them; vulgarity must also repel, for there is no refinement—let poets and romancers say what they will—there is no true refinement in a vicious life.

Grace Dalton, though simple in the extreme, was yet high-minded where her sense of delicacy was concerned; and when the daughter of this poor woman returned from the beach sobbing, and making as much display as possible of her grief, Grace felt too much offended to permit her to remain another moment in the house. She was even going without having fully discharged her errand, but suddenly recollecting her own words—"he is dead now, those who are left, ought to forget and forgive,"—she turned back and requested the woman to make haste to the house of Mr. Kennedy, to offer her services there, and by no means to linger if they should not be accepted.

Notwithstanding the dreadful calamity which had so recently taken place, it did not so nearly touch the family of Mrs. Falkland, but that all was peace that day within her dwelling. Falkland, wearied out with excitement, had retired to rest; and by the time their evening meal was prepared, he was able to join his mother and sister once more around the social board.

The fierce gale of the morning had then died away; and when the moon rose, and shed her silvery light over the rough promontories that stretched away towards the sea, George Falkland and his mother sat again on the rose-covered balcony, their hands clasped together in that expressive silence, which conveys more meaning to the heart than the most eloquent words. His sister, too, was there, and Grace Dalton; and all looked towards the sea except Grace, who seemed to be teaching the elements where it ought to climb, though her small hands trembled so that she could scarcely guide its fragile twigs.

Never are the beloved of the family circle so dear as when recently escaped from danger; and Mrs. Falkland and her daughter looked with affectionate interest at the noble youth who he'd a hand of bath, and then at the wide sea, whose ruffled waves could still be heard retreating in the distance, and their hearts yearned over him as over a treasure newly found, or just redeemed from loss.

The subject of their separate thoughts were the same—the awful night that was past; when, another wave of that angry flood