

# THE EBB-TIDE .

## CHAPTER I

### NIGHT ON THE BEACH

THROUGHOUT the island world of the Pacific, scattered men of many European races and from almost every grade of society carry activity and disseminate disease. Some prosper, some vegetate. Some have mounted the steps of thrones and owned islands and navies. Others again must marry for a livelihood ; a strapping, merry, chocolate-coloured dame supports them in sheer idleness ; and, dressed like natives, but still retaining some foreign element of gait or attitude, still perhaps with some relic (such as a single eyeglass) of the officer and gentleman, they sprawl in palm-leaf verandahs and entertain an island audience with memoirs of the music-hall. And there are still others, less pliable, less capable, less fortunate, perhaps less base, who