

(ORIGINAL.)

AUNT MARY'S NOTE BOOK.

BY E. M. M.

Aunt Mary came smiling one evening into the room, where Mrs. Selwyn and her daughters were busily employed, finishing some warm garments for some poor distressed objects of their charity in the village; her Note Book was in her hand.

"I am sure you have a story for us," exclaimed Julia, her youngest neice; "if so, pray indulge us with it, my dear Aunt."

"Most willingly, my child," she replied, as she drew in her chair to join the domestic circle; "perhaps you may be disappointed that I do not this time figure in it myself; but the last visit I paid to my friend, Mrs. Somerville, was too barren of incident to afford a story, which was, however, repaid by her relating the one I am going to read, and which is quite a 'romance of real life;' not the romance of olden days, which is haunted chambers and its mysterious witcheries, but a simple tale, and if it only yield half the pleasure to you which it has given me to collect it for you, richly shall I be repaid."

She then spread her book upon the table, and commenced the story of

THE CONFIDED.

THE young Earl of Blondville was riding leisurely through the woods of his own domain—his thoughts engaged upon the plans he had in view to improve the happiness of those who were so fortunate as to be placed under his protection, and were scattered over his extensive possessions—he had nearly reached the opening which led immediately up to the great gate of the castle, when his attention was arrested by the appearance of two females, who were sitting on a bank overshadowed by trees. The one was an ancient dame, and from her simple, though highly respectable costume, might be taken for a nurse, or favourite upper domestic—the other appeared but just emerged from childhood—and the white dress in which she was attired, showed to great advantage the slight graceful figure, and contrasted well with a profusion of raven tresses which fell over her shoulders—the silken bonnet was thrown back, and she was looking eagerly up at her com-

panion, who, with spectacled nose, appeared to be engaged in extracting a thorn from one of the most beautiful hands in the world. Her face was turned away or rather shaded from the view of Lord Blondville by her ringlets, until he approached quite near, when one glimpse of its surpassing beauty rivetted him to the spot. He dared scarcely breathe lest he should disturb what it was a perfect delight to gaze upon. The old lady continued prying intently, but apparently without success, while the maiden laughingly said, in the most musical tone, "you may look forever, dear Ursula, but you will never find it."

"Ah, my eyes are not what they used to be," replied the dame; "I remember when they were bright enough, and could see any thing they sought, but age and sorrow have dimmed them."

"No sorrow shall again reach you, that your own Amy can avert," returned the lovely girl, throwing her arms round the neck of her companion, who pressed her with fond affection to her heart, "but my poor hand," continued she, looking down on it, as it rested on her knee, "who will remove the thorn?"

This was an appeal which Lord Blondville felt to be perfectly irresistible—he made a slight movement towards them, when they both started; the moment the youthful stranger beheld him, she uttered a cry of terror, and covered her face with both hands. The dame was more composed, after looking on him intently, she turned to her charge, saying, "It is not he, my child, look up, do not alarm yourself." The Earl was distressed, he dismounted, and giving his horse to his servant, desired him to ride on with it to the castle; he then approached the ladies.

"I regret much having caused you alarm," he said, "it was unintentional, believe me; I was on my way home, when I was attracted by seeing you sitting here."

"It is the Earl himself," said the dame, "you are then safe, my dear young lady."

Her charge on hearing this, ventured to turn her eyes on the stranger—what she met in his gaze I know not—but in an instant her beautiful cheek