

(ORIGINAL.)

AUNT MARY'S NOTE BOOK.

BY E. M. M.

THE next evening which was devoted to reading, Aunt Mary, with a look of importance, and a smile of pleasure, called forth by the kind encouragement she had received, unclasped her Note Book, and read from its pages the following story of

THE MAIDEN OF ST. MARGERETS;

OR, THE PROMISE.

ON leaving the peaceful, happy retreat of the wilderness, I proceeded to the coast as the autumn was fast chasing away all the beauties of summer, and changing her rich green foliage into the mellow tints which precede the decay of nature. A garden to me, at this season, is full of melancholy; its pathways strewn with withered leaves, its trees and shrubs stripped of all their verdure, while the prim pale Michaelmas daisy alone is to be seen, triumphing over all the wrecks of loveliness, near which, in their brief day of sunshine, it dared not have raised its head. My chastened feelings of regret were changed as I approached in sight of the sea, and heard the rushing of its blue waves, as they dashed in feathery foam over the sands. I gazed around me, and clasping my hands exclaimed, "behold God is every where, and His image over all His works. His spirit moves on the face of the waters, His footsteps may not be seen, yet o'er the storm he rides and rules, forgetting not, in the grand, the lofty, and sublime, the meanest, and the most humble of His dependent creatures."

I drove at once to St. Margerets, the name of Mr. and Mrs. Harrington's delightful residence, distant about seven miles from the town of P——, yet commanding a fine prospect, from its windows, of the sea. Mrs. Harrington was an old school acquaintance of mine, but from a dissimilarity of tastes, we had been long estranged, until I accidentally met her, while staying with her daughters in the house of a mutual friend, when our early acquaintance became renewed and led to my present visit. St. Margerets was finely situated, on a gentle rise; it was a handsome stone building, adorned with porticos, round which wreathed in summer the passion flower, the clematis, and the sweet scented jasmine; the rich plantations of evergreens in its shrubberies afforded to it a freshness even at this

season, which was very pleasing, while the opening to the sea, from various points, increased its interest, and its beauty. On arriving at the hall door, I was warmly welcomed by Mr. Harrington and his youngest daughter, Belinda, who came out to meet me, and lead me to the drawing room, where I was received with politeness and cordiality by Mrs. Harrington, and her elder daughter Marion. This room was tastefully and elegantly furnished, the walls were entirely hung with chintz drapery, and the sofas and ottomans covered with the same light material, gave it the appearance of a tent. There were musical instruments, tables strewn with handsome books, fancy works, and bijouterie of every description—but to me, the weary traveller, the most grateful object, at that moment, was a bright clear fire, which in the month of October was indeed welcome.

"You have been anxiously watched for today, Mrs. Mary," said Mr. Harrington, who was a plain unpretending country gentleman, devoted to the improvements of his place, and to the important duties of a magistrate. "No sister Anne looked out from her turret with more anxiety, than Belinda has for hours been looking from her window for you."

I turned to the sweet girl as he spoke, and thanked her with a smile, which she answered by pressing my hand.

Belinda Harrington was not a decided beauty, but there was a grace, a gentleness in her demeanour, which attracted at once, and when more known, the feeling she created ripened into affection—her large hazel eyes—soft as the gazelle's, her fair complexion, and a very sweet smile formed the charms of a face, which was not moulded in Grecian precision; her light brown ringlets fell in natural luxuriance round her brow, except when she would carelessly fasten them back if they impeded her sight. Not a trace of vanity was perceptible, or the slightest affectation, all was nature unsophisticated and pure—she had been educated by the mother of Mr. Harrington, with whom she had resided from her earliest childhood, until the good lady's death, which occurred the preceding year, and for whom Belinda was still in mourning—this loss was her first grief and one which she heavily felt, and it was the sympathy I had shown her under her bereavement, which