

AUNT MARY'S NOTE BOOK.

BY E. M. M.

Continued from our last Number.

THIS day passed more agreeably to Amy than the preceding one, which had been clouded by care; she felt that she was amongst those who strove to make her happy, and whose attentions were dictated by the kindest sympathy for the peculiar situation in which she was placed. Mr. Martyn she looked up to as a father, while the affection manifested for her by young Lord Arthur was very gratifying—nor could she be insensible to the considerate conduct of the Earl, who, in desiring the presence of his sister, had shown so much delicate thoughtfulness.

"If I could only hear from my beloved mamma, I should almost feel happy," said she to Ursula, who was dressing her for the evening; "it is so delightful to wander about the grounds of this castle without fear, and to find friends in all whom I meet—her presence alone is wanting to render it perfect."

"Patience, patience, my child," replied her faithful attendant, "all in good time; you must be content with your poor old Ursula for the present."

"Dear, kind Ursula," cried Amy, throwing her arms affectionately round her, "I have cause indeed for thankfulness in possessing you; may we never be parted more."

When the little party met at dinner, Mr. Martyn was amused at the account of Amy's visit, under Mrs. Bennet's auspices, to the picture gallery.

"Of course you had the story of the miller's daughter," he said.

"I am afraid I deprived our worthy conductress the pleasure of finishing it," replied Lord Blondville, laughing; "but it was a dangerous subject for her to commence upon, and I felt for the patience of Lady Amanda; by the way, Arthur tells me," he continued, turning to her, "that you are fond of the water, and he has petitioned me to order the boat—have I done right in so doing?"

Amy naturally looked at Mr. Martyn, which he instantly understood; "we all hope to have the pleasure of accompanying you," he said, "and on so beautiful an evening I think it will do you good."

As the hour which had been fixed upon drew

near, Arthur's delight and impatience became unbounded; he scarcely gave Amy time to prepare, but taking her hand, he hurried her down the lawn, to the side of the lake, where the boat appeared in readiness; six men were at the oars, accompanied by the Earl's private band. Amy was placed under the rich awning with Arthur by her side, the Earl and Mr. Martyn following. The evening was balmy and soft, with scarcely a breeze to ripple the water, and the setting sun, which cast a brilliant hue over the rich foliage of the trees and shrubs, added considerably to the beauty of the scene, rendered still more attractive by the music. Never had Amy enjoyed any thing like this, and her spirits, as they glided over the stream, became gradually more light and buoyant. In Venice, the gondola has always been a penance since Father Anselm was her companion—but here she was surrounded by friends, all vying with each other to please, and she gazed around her, charmed with every thing her eye rested upon. Lord Blondville looked with increasing interest on her beautiful face, gratified to see that it had already lost much of that anxious expression, which he had so painfully noticed on her arrival. In the midst of the lake, which was extensive, rose a tiny island, covered with verdure, whose mossy banks were decked with scented flowers. Here they paused, and mooring the little boat, the Earl assisted Amy to disembark, when followed by their companions, he led her to the interior, where, to her surprise, appeared an artificial grotto, most tastefully finished, with splendid looking-glasses, the frames of which were entirely composed of shells, and rustic seats of many grotesque forms.

"This is, indeed, a place of enchantment," said Amy, "and one almost expects to behold some beautiful naiad step forth and demand why we have dared to invade her territories."

"You are the only power to whom I will vow allegiance here," replied Lord Blondville gaily; "behold the faithful subjects of your realm—kneel, Lord Arthur," he continued, playfully endeavouring