

AUNT MARY'S NOTE BOOK.

BY E. M. M.

Continued from our last Number.

Mr. Harrington and his brother remained sitting up in the drawing room until a late hour—they said little while we were present, but I knew that they were anxious, not only for Blanchard, but for Lindsey, who had not yet returned. I had just yielded to an overpowering weariness, and was sleeping most soundly, when a voice awoke me suddenly and in alarm—I started up, and beheld Belinda in a loose white robe, pale as monumental marble, standing at the foot of the bed.

“Gracious Heaven, what has happened?” I exclaimed.

“Did you hear nothing?” she replied in a hollow tone; “listen, there it is again.”

I did so, and distinctly heard the report of fire arms—they fell like a knell on my heart; but I tried to hide my feelings from the unhappy girl, who I held locked in my arms, while I endeavoured to reassure her.

“My child, place your trust in that God who has never yet forsaken you,” I said; “remember that Blanchard is in the performance of a duty, and therefore will be watched over by the same Almighty power who so miraculously preserved us all. Belinda, I have beheld fine traits in that young man this night—he is a noble creature—rest assured he will live to become all that you wish—he is too good to be lost.”

“Oh, may God grant it,” cried the agonized girl, as she sank on her knees by the bed side, and burying her face in the clothes each time that the firing recurred, which continued at intervals for some little time, when all became hushed and silent.

“Now raise your head, for it is over, my beloved Belinda,” I continued; “and tomorrow will bring you glad tidings, rest assured. These are the moments when your religion should shine forth in that reliance on God’s mercy, which is so pleasing to Him, who never afflicts willingly, or beyond what is needful; Belinda, I may safely say, that in all His dispensations, from my youth up until now, He has been merciful as a father to his child, nor would I

change one decree that he has willed, painful though it might have been at the time. Let this encourage us for the future, to trust Him in all things, for we have only to review the past, when countless mercies will rise up to our remembrance, and rebuke our ungrateful fears.”

“Ah, dear Mrs. Mary, I feel the truth of all you say, and most fully does my heart respond to it,” replied Belinda, resting her soft and tearful eyes upon me, “and when all is sunshine around me, and those who I love are near, I think I will never again yield to one unworthy fear; but they leave me, dangers encompass them, and alas my strength fails, and I am miserable—then does the cry of drowning Peter, rebuked by the Saviour’s words: ‘Oh ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt,’ resound in mine ears, and I am humbled that I have evinced so little of that Christian fortitude, which the religion I revere inculcates.”

Marion at this moment entered, she had also been alarmed by the report of fire arms, and had hastened to her sister’s room, where not finding her, she came to mine trembling.

“Can you tell me what all that firing means?” she said; “I have learnt your evening’s adventures only in part; is it true that you encountered a band of smugglers?”

I answered her by relating all that had occurred since we last met, and that Blanchard was even now employed with the coast guard in endeavouring to secure them.

“I trust he may be more fortunate than the last party who were engaged with them,” replied Marion; “when a young midshipman was dangerously wounded, and found laying in a dying state at Mr. Fortescue’s door, whither he had crawled in all his agony.”

“Do not add to our anxiety, my dear Marion,” I said, as a heavy groan from Belinda expressed the intensity of her sufferings; “is your father still sitting up with Captain Harrington?”

“No, I rather think not, they retired when the