

AUNT MARY'S NOTE BOOK.

BY E. M. M.

Continued from our last Number.

Our travellers set out at an early hour on the following morning. The Earl watched the carriage which contained Amy, as it drove out at the court yard, until it was shut from his view by the broad avenue of trees; then turning to Mr. Martyn, he said, gloomily:

"We have suffered an angel to leave us; I much question our wisdom in so doing. By heavens, Martyn! her tears, and innocent expressions of sorrow, both last evening and when going away, have nearly unmanned me; had I not pledged my word to my mother, I would have caught her to my heart, and bid her stay for ever. Why should we lose two years of happiness?—surely life's page is brief enough."

"Blondeville, you will not repent having acceded to the wishes of the Countess," replied Mr. Martyn; "it would have been cruel to breathe a word beyond the kindness of a brother, to one of her tender age—to wed her, madness. How you delight in her perfectly natural and undisguised expressions of affection; all these would be instantly checked, and that beautiful simplicity, so suited to her years, destroyed, were she to view you in any other light than the one she now does. The loss of her sweet society we shall both feel—for she has been to me as a loved child; and to guide so gentle, so pure minded a being, in religion's paths, I have felt to be a high privilege, and one which I had long prayed might be mine. Yes," he continued, musing, "in disposition and talent, she is the counterpart of her mother—her beauty is that of her fathers. Ah, my friend, you lament but the postponement of happiness—how would you bear to see the cup dashed from your lips forever; go, Harold, and be thankful. Yet let me again warn you—kneel to no earthly idol."

He then retired to the privacy of his study, while the Earl, restless and unsettled, ordered his horse. He rode some distance, scarcely heeding the path he followed, until an inclination to visit the spot where he had first beheld Amy, proved a stimulus, and he galloped forward in the direction of the woods. The sun had scarcely power to penetrate the umbrageous foliage of the trees, and the scene presented a gloomy aspect, as he entered its confines. On drawing near the mossy bank so well re-

membered, he was startled on beholding it occupied by a female—but oh, how unlike the one he had last seen there. Her garb denoted that she belonged to the gipsy tribe, and as she turned her face towards him on his approach, he almost shrank from its forbidding expression, while his horse showed some dislike at passing her. She leant forward on her crutch, and uttered a short discordant laugh, which jarred unpleasantly on his ear. A ragged child was near her, gathering sticks.

"My lord is abroad early this morning," said the crone; "who comes he hither to seek, and wherefore casts he such lowering looks?—did he expect to find a fairer one than I, on the green sward?—ha, ha, ha; listen to my song." And she wildly chanted the following:—

"The dove she has flown from her happy rest;
She seeks a home in the falcon's nest;
My lord may look out from his castle in vain—
For the dove she will not return again."

"Cease your foreboding raven's croak," exclaimed the Earl, rendered impatient by his prancing steed, and angry at so unpleasing an interruption to his meditations. "Away, old hag, else I will have you taken up for trespassing."

"Aye, that is the way you nobles speak to the aged, and the poor, and the miserable," replied the gipsy, as she rose from the bank and stood before him. "Pampered as you are in your princely abodes, and every wish gratified ere expressed, how can you sympathize with the gnawing hunger, with the hearth made desolate, or the broken heart?—spur on your proud steed, and trample me in the dust; and as you glance around you as far as the eye can reach, say, 'behold, all is mine—wherefore should the beggar dare set her foot to pollute the soil;' but boast not thyself," she added bitterly, "the day *must* come, when six feet of earth will be thine inheritance, as well as mine."

"Why speak so severely?" replied the Earl, struck by her words, and commiserating her miserable appearance, bent double, as she was, by age, and clad in the meanest habiliments; "God forbid that the poor or the unfortunate should ever be driven from my doors; surely you have never sought relief at the castle in vain?"