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BEATRICE; OR, THE SPOILED CHILD.

A TALE.

BY E. M. M.

Continued from our last Number.

“To be wroth with what we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.” . . .

“Have you not love enough to bear with me,
When that rash humour, which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful.”

Shakspeare.

WHEN Mary found herself once more in the solitude of her own chamber, she gave full vent to her feelings, which for so many hours had been painfully suppressed.

“He is my brother now,” she exclaimed, as she paced the room with agitated steps; “and in that relation alone I must learn to love him. Thou, oh my Father, wilt help me to do so,” she continued, looking up to heaven with streaming eyes; “wilt help me to rise above every care, every thought that would impede my progress in the Christian’s path—from henceforth I devote myself to Thee; accept me, I implore Thee, and never suffer me to yield again so entirely to an earthly affection, for oh it has been ensnaring and full of bitterness; yet has it taught me mine own weakness, mine own vileness in Thy sight, therefore is the mortifying trial salutary. It has passed, and I thank Thee. I thank Thee that my secret has been divulged to no one—that I have been spared that humiliation at least. Look down with an eye of compassion on Thy servant, humbly kneeling before Thee—contrite—penitent at the foot of the Cross, and shed the light of Thy countenance upon me—say to me: ‘Arise, Mary, thy sins be forgiven thee;’ then shall I have strength to proceed on my way, for the chain is broken which bound me to earth, and I am free—free to serve Thee faithfully my Lord and my God.”

Mary rose from her knees, after this petition, a new creature—for when did the penitent plead in vain to that merciful Being, who is ever more ready to hear than we are to pray. The strength she needed was graciously bestowed upon her, and in less than a month subsequent to the marriage of her sister, peace had dawned upon her soul, and happi-

ness shone in her path like glittering sunbeams, when the tempest is over. Yet some anxious fears she could not help indulging on account of the young Beatrice, who she knew had been immersed in a constant round of gay pleasure, since first she had left her childhood’s home, for Norwood Abbey, and that a perceptible change had in consequence taken place in her thoughts and feelings, which Mary lamented to see were now entirely given to the world and its vanities. In Colonel Brereton she felt that she would meet a steady and determined guide—one from whose intellectual and gifted mind she would reap much that would tend to strengthen hers; but this was not enough, for while his heart was untouched by the power of vital religion, and in utter ignorance of its extreme sinfulness in the sight of God, how could he lead her to the fountain of living waters, from whence she might draw and receive spiritual strength for the performance of her duties.

“But the hand of God is not shortened,” would the pious Mary say, as she pondered on these things. “Mighty to save—can he not bring light out of darkness—beauty and order out from the awful chaos.”

It was at this period that, to her infinite astonishment, and while confiding her fears and anxieties for the beloved Beatrice to Mr. Mortimer, that she first discovered his attachment for herself. More than ever humbled in her own opinion by her recent disappointment, the thought that any one could love her, was strange yet pleasing. She had always experienced for the amiable minister a high respect and regard, but now when his sentiments, betrayed in an unguarded moment, were laid open before her, at first she pitied—then she listened—she wept—she trembled—and in time she loved—but knowing, as she did, the value that her parents attached to wealth, she felt that to afford him any hope would be only cruel. This he dared not aspire to. He had met the sweet smile which told him he was not indifferent to her—he had pressed the coveted hand between both his, and the heart of Edward Mortimer bound-