

DISCIPLINE.

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A Nobel.

BY MARY BRUNTON,

AUTHOR OF "SELF-CONTROL."

All-pitying Heaven,
Severe in mercy, chastening in its love
Oft-times in dark and awful visitation
Doth interpose; and leads the wanderer back
To the straight path.

JOANNA BAILLE.

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CHAPTER I.

I HAVE heard it remarked, that he who writes his own history ought to possess Irish humour, Scotch prudence, and English sincerity;—the first, that his work may be read; the second, that it may be read without injury to himself; the third, that the perusal of it may be profitable to others. I might, perhaps, with truth declare, that I possess only the last of these qualifications. But, besides that my readers will probably take the liberty of estimating for themselves my merits as a narrator, I suspect that professions of humility may possibly deceive the professor himself; and that, while I am honestly confessing my disqualifications, I may be secretly indemnifying my pride, by glorying in the candour of my confession.

Any expression of self-abasement might, indeed, appear peculiarly misplaced as a preface to whole volumes of egotism; the world being generally uncharitable enough to believe, that vanity may somewhat influence him who chooses himself for his theme. Nor can I be certain that this charge is wholly inapplicable to me; since it is notorious to common observation, that, rather than forego their darling subject, the vain will expatiate even on their errors. A better motive, however, mingles with those which impel me to relate my story. It is no unworthy feeling which leads such as are indebted beyond return, to tell of the benefits they have received; or which prompts one who has escaped from imminent peril, to warn others of the danger of their way.

It is, I believe, usual with those who undertake to be their own biographers, to begin with tracing their illustrious descent. I fear this portion of my history must be compiled from very scanty materials; for my father, the only one of the race who was ever known to me, never mentioned his family, except to preface a philippic against all dignities in church and state. Against these he objected, as fostering “that aristocratical contumely, which flesh and blood cannot endure;” a vice which I have heard him declare to be, above all others, the object of his special antipathy. For this selection, which will probably obtain sympathy only from the base-born, my father was not without reason; for, to the pride of birth it was doubtless owing that my grandfather, a cadet of an ancient family, was doomed to starve upon a curacy, in revenge for his contaminating the blood of the Percys by an unequal alli-