PEN TAMAR; OR, THE HISTORY OF AN OLD MAID

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Pen Tamar; or, The history of an old maid by Mrs. H. M. Bowdler

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MRS. H. M. BOWDLER

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Trieste

PEN TAMAR;

OR,

THE HISTORY OF AN OLD MAID.

BY THE LATE

MRS. H. M. BOWDLER.

"The Old Maid is a sort of venomous animal; so wicked in its temper, and so mischievous in its disposition, that one is surprised that its very existence should be tolerated in civilised society."

HINDOO RAJAH, vol. ii. p. 23.

Second Edition.

LONDON:

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LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1831.

PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

THE publication of the following tale having been delayed at the time it was written, the author at length decided on deferring it during her life,—expressing a *wish* that it should finally be offered to the public; yet leaving that point to be determined by two of her confidential friends.

There cannot surely be any one in the very extensive circle of her acquaintance, to whom such a memorial of her amiable and pious mind will not be acceptable; and even those to whom she was personally unknown, can scarcely fail to derive gratification, as well as advantage, from the perusal of this work. The lessons inculcated are plain to every capacity,—the virtues described are attainable in every

station; and whilst the "Sermons on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity" explain and enforce those "doctrines" and "duties," the excellent and lamented author has endeavoured, in this interesting little story, to delineate a character formed upon Christian principles, and to trace the progress of their influence from infancy to old age. She exemplified them in her own life, — and her writings still bear testimony to their truth.

This tribute of esteem and respect is gratefully offered to her revered memory, by her affectionate friend,

THE EDITOR.

Exeter, July 17. 1830.

PREFACE

BY THE AUTHOR.

In offering this little tribute of affection and gratitude to my friends, I feel it necessary to observe that it was written during the winter of the year 1801; with a wish to induce authors of far superior talents to unite instruction with amusement in works of imagination. The writings of Mr. Godwin and others had spread jacobinical principles; and the horrors of the French Revolution, then fresh in my recollection, led me to choose a period in the English history which would give me an opportunity of bearing my humble testimony in favour of the plain and simple politics of the Gospel,—"Fear God, and honour the king."

Novels at that time were in general little calculated to improve the morals, or even the taste, of those by whom they were eagerly perused; and the world had not seen the masterly productions of the unknown genius of the North, nor the admirable lessons of Christian morality which have since appeared in the enchanting works of Mrs. Brunton. If Discipline had made me acquainted with Miss Mortimer, I never should have ventured to delineate the character of Matilda Heywood. The idea of placing the introductory chapter at the end of the book, might be supposed to be borrowed from Waverley, if Waverley had then been in existence; and the incident of the fire in Pen Tamar so strongly resembles a story in the Cottagers of Glenburnie, that it may appear to have been borrowed from that ingenious work; — but this little tale was written before the other was published, and it was never seen by my lamented friend Mrs. Hamilton. But whilst I endeavour to clear myself from the charge of plagiarism, I acknowledge that

the most interesting part of my little book is not the production of my imagination; for the principal circumstances mentioned in the two last chapters describe a scene which it is impossible I should ever forget. May it be fresh in my recollection in the awful hour which must *now* be near! May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!

H. M. Bowdler.

Exeter, Dec. 21. 1819.