

**THE BENEVOLENT MERCHANT; OR, THE
DEALINGS OF GOD IN PROVIDENCE AND
GRACE. A NARRATIVE INTENDED TO
GUIDE YOUNG DISCIPLES IN FORMING A
RIGHT JUDGMENT OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE
IN THE VARIOUS EVENTS OF HUMAN LIFE**

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The Benevolent Merchant; Or, the Dealings of God in Providence and Grace. A Narrative Intended to Guide Young Disciples in Forming a Right Judgment of the Divine Purpose in the Various Events of Human Life by M. N.

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BY M. N.

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

JOHN xiii. 7.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And sees his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

COWPER.



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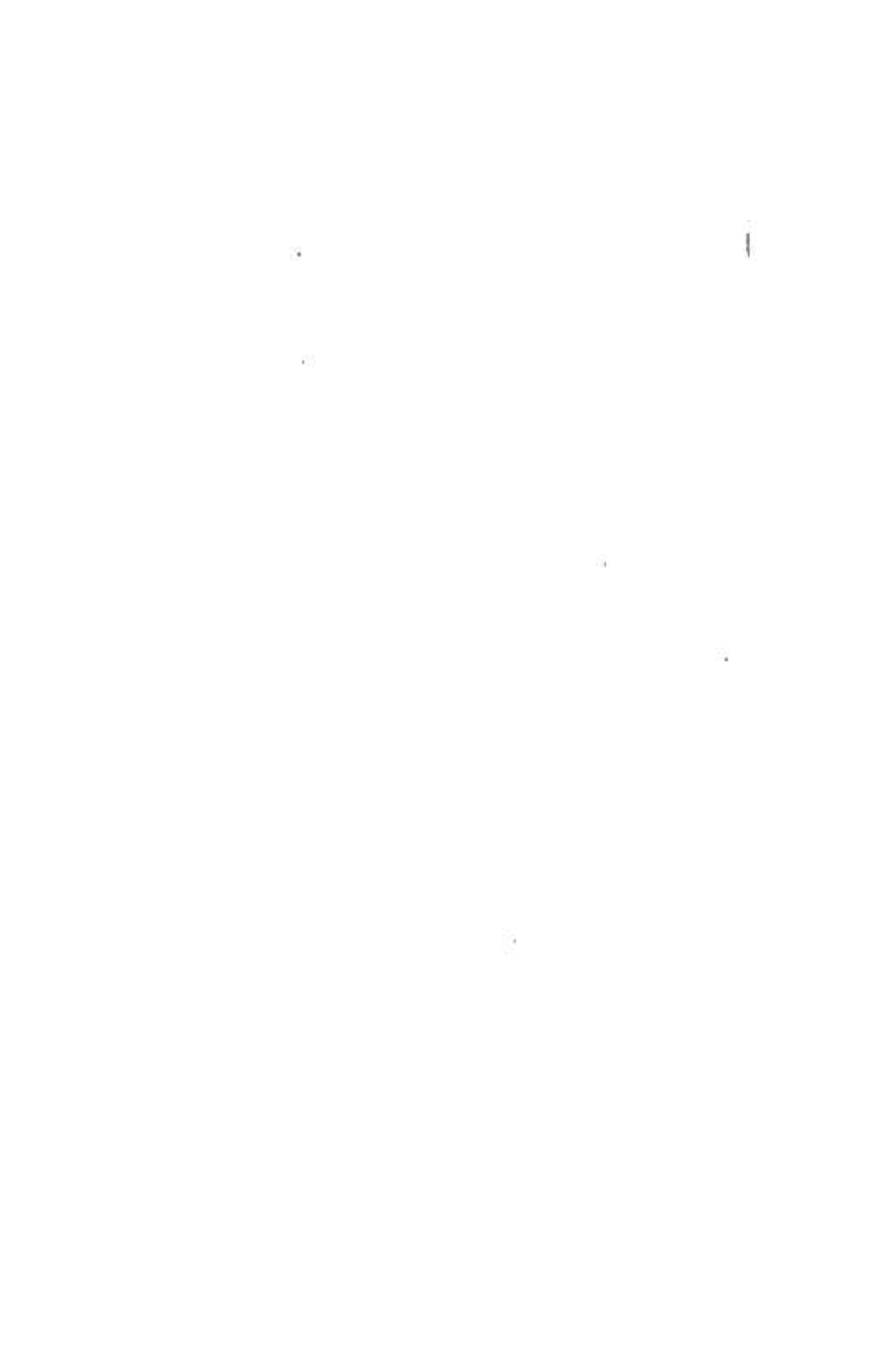
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PREFACE.

THE following tale is offered to the rising generation with the wish that (under the divine blessing) its perusal may, in some degree, lead to the conviction that the ways of wisdom "are ways of pleasantness," and that "all her paths are peace."

The Writer lays no claim to the merit of *originality*; but she feels it proper to state that she has been careful to inculcate, in these pages, such sentiments only as are sanctioned by the *plainest* declarations of Scripture.



THE
BENEVOLENT MERCHANT.

CHAPTER I.

How sweet the promise to the youthful mind;
That they, who early seek, shall early find.
Prov. viii. 17.

MARIA WILSON and Emma Darnley were quite unknown to each other until they met at Merton Grove, an establishment conducted by Mrs. Arnold. The carriage, which left Maria under the care of her new preceptress, had just rolled from the door, when another arrived with Emma Darnley, accompanied by her mamma.

Mrs. Darnley, wishing to have some private conversation with Mrs. Arnold, took an affectionate, though hasty, leave of Emma, who she begged might be conducted to her future companions.

Emma, although a girl of a very buoyant spirit and lively imagination, was possessed of a very affectionate heart. The tear started from her eye, as she bade her tender mamma adieu. She was soon seated in the schoolroom, near Maria Wilson, whose gentle spirit was rather overcome, when she found herself in a room full of strangers, who were already acquainted with one another, and were in groups relating among themselves what had passed during their holidays. But their volubility was soon hushed by their observing the new comers in the room. Nothing but whispering was now heard. "Who are they?" was the general enquiry, uttered in a suppressed tone.—"Where did they come from?" whispered one;—"I do not think they are sisters," said another;—while a third remarked, "I wonder if we shall like them!"

The two strangers looked at each other. Emma, who was quick and openhearted, said to Maria, in a low tone:—"It is rather awkward not to know anybody; but we shall get acquainted in time, and I think I shall like *you* for a companion." Maria turned towards the good-natured girl, who

was about her own age, and, smiling through her tears, replied,—“I hope we shall be allowed to keep together; I shall be glad to have you for my friend.”

At this moment, Mrs. Arnold entered, and desired her former pupils to shew every kind attention to their new companions.

Mrs. Arnold was what is generally termed a very clever woman. She possessed indeed many excellent qualities: added to a considerable degree of general knowledge, she had a good memory, much self-possession, and, when she chose to unbend, much sweetness of manner. She was careful to cultivate a modest deportment in her pupils; very unlike that forwardness and display of talent so much looked for in these degenerate days. She was strictly correct in her transactions; and, although her time and care were incessantly occupied by the concerns of her school, she took a pride in continually doing acts of kindness to the poor in her neighbourhood. In short, there were many amiable traits in Mrs. Arnold: but, alas! in regard to the most important of all properties, she was in no better state