

APPENDIX.

CONCERNING THE PORTRAITS.

HANNAH MORE, 1825.

IT is Lord Beaconsfield who has italicised, so to speak, the fondness of the world for personal details respecting those who have been celebrated, and perhaps nothing so conveys the idea of a personality as a good portrait.

This I may in every case claim to have secured, through the quite extraordinary kindness of people upon whom I have no claim, save that of lowly fellowship in admiration of the subjects depicted.

In view of the special interest attaching to many of the portraits, a few words about each of them cannot be out of place.

The miniature of Hannah More, so kindly lent for reproduction by the Bristol Museum Committee, was presented

to that Institution, in 1902, by a mysterious donor — E. P. B. — who expressed his emphatic desire to remain anonymous. Such reticence is rare nowadays; and I regret in practice what I respect in theory, as I am thereby prevented from tracing the history of this exquisite bit of ivory painting.

The date of it, however, is fairly well established as being between 1820 and 1825; for, in her 'Memoirs,'¹ we read of the "yellow, richly embroidered shawl which enveloped her shoulders, and the pretty net cap tied under her chin with white satin ribbon." It is in this costume that she is painted in the miniature; and the fact that she never wore a jewel or trinket or any adjunct to her dress of the merely ornamental kind, which is also therein alluded to, finds corroboration in the picture, though the daintiness of the whole is indisputable.

We are further told that "her figure is singularly *petite*; but to have any idea of the expression of her countenance, you must imagine the small withered face of a woman in her seventy-seventh year, and imagine also (shaded but not obscured by long and perfectly white eyelashes) eyes dark, brilliant, flashing and penetrating, sparkling from object to object, with all the fire and energy of youth, and smiling welcome on all around."

The eyes which her sisters called "diamond," and which the painters complained that they could not put upon canvas, are described by Mr S.C. Hall in his 'Memories' as being, when she was eighty, the "clearest, brightest, and most searching that I have ever seen: they were singularly dark,— positively black they seemed as they looked forth among carefully trained tresses of her own white hair,— and absolutely sparkled while she spoke of those of whom she was the venerated link between the present and the long past" To all these characteristics the portrait itself is a silent testimony.

¹ 'Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Hannah More,' by William Roberts, 1836.