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SUMMER'S GONE.

BY MRS. NORTON.

Hark! through the dim wood dying,
With a moan,
Faintly the winds are sighing—
Summer's gone!
There, when my bruised heart feeleth,
And the pale moon her face revealeth,
Darkly my footsteps stealeth,
To weep alone.
Hour after hour I wander,
By men unseen,
And sadly my wrong thoughts ponder,
On what hath been.
Summer's gone!

There, in our own green bowers
Long ago,
Our path through the tangled flowers
Threading slow;
Oft hand in hand entwining—
Oft side by side reclining—
We've watched in its crimson shining
The sunset glow.
Dimly that sun now burneth
For me alone—
Spring after spring returneth,
Thou art gone.
Summer's gone!

Still on my worn cheek playeth
The restless breeze;
Still in its freshness strayeth
Between the trees.
Still the blue streamlet gusheth—
Still the broad river rusheth—
Still the calm silence husheth
The heart's disease;
But who shall bring our meetings
Back again?
What shall recall thy greetings—
Loved in vain!
Summer's gone!

SCOTTISH RURAL COURTSHIP.

But warily tent when ye come to court me,
And come-na unless the back-yett be a-je;,
Synce up the back-stile, and let me body see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me.—BURNS.

In no country whatever is the great and engrossing business of courtship conducted in so romantic a manner as among the rural people of Scotland. Excepting among the higher classes, who have time entirely at their own disposal, night is the season in which "lovers breathe their vows," and in which their sweethearts "hear them." Let the night be "ne'er so wild," and the swain "ne'er so weary," if he has an engagement upon his hands, he will perform it at all hazards; he will climb mountains, leap burns, or wade rivers, not only with indifference, but with enthusiasm; and, wrapt in his plaid, he will set at nought the fury of the elements or the wrath of rivals. The poetry of our bards is full of allusions to this custom of immemorial origin. Burns, in particular, has delighted to sing of the meetings of wooers and wooed at the "gloaming," or twilight, and the season of darker night. His song of "The Lea-Rig" will readily recur to recollection:—

Although the night were ne'er sae wet,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind deary, O.

And, also, his fully more tender strains of "My Nanny, O":

But I'll tak my plaid, and out I'll steal,
And o'er the hill to Nanny, O.

I have known several instances of young men, who toiled all day at the plough, the harrows, the scythe, etc., walking fifteen miles to see their sweethearts, after the hour of nine in the evening, and returning in time for their work on the ensuing morn; and this, be it observed, was not done once or twice, but repeatedly—week after week, for several months. Twenty miles of a journey, upon an errand of such a nature, is regarded as a trifle by many a young farmer who has a spare horse to carry him.

During these stolen interviews, if a mutual attachment subsists between the parties, another assignation is always made; and never was oath more religiously kept than is this simple compact, ratified by no other ceremony than a parting kiss, or a tender shake of the hand. Time appears to have leaden wings with both, until the hour of meeting again arrives; when the swain sets out anew with alacrity, be it rain, sleet, snow, murky or moonlight. His fair one, true to her trust, has by this time eluded the vigilance of father and mother, of maid or man-servant, and has noiselessly lifted the latch, undrawn the door-bar, or escaped by the window, and awaits him, with fond impatience, at the favourite spot which they have consecrated to their love. He joyfully beholds her in the distance as he approaches, gliding like an apparition from the house, and sauntering about until his arrival; and she, not less attentive to every thing that is stirring, perceives him like a shadow amid the distant dimness, watches him as his figure becomes more distinct, recognises his gait, his air, his every peculiarity, and at last, on the strength of her conviction, runs to throw herself into his arms, and bid him welcome.

In this way courtships are so secretly conducted, that it is frequently never known, excepting among the near friends of the respective parties, that a couple are more than commonly acquainted, until the progenitor, from his seat upon Sunday, publishes the banns of their marriage. People are extremely fond of discussing topics of that nature—of scrupulously weighing the merits of each party in the balance; of dropping oblique hints, and sly insinuations, and of prying, with impertinent curiosity, into motives and conduct—some of them, for the sake of indulging an envious or malevolent disposition, and others from a hope of discovering some flaw or failing which may keep their own in countenance, and save them from the appearance of singularity. For this reason, it is always deemed a most fortunate and happy event should two lovers manage to bring matters to a crisis before the public ears have begun to tingle with a report of their intentions. Then it is only a sudden buzz, which gradually dies from the moment of their marriage, and they are left, with characters unsifted, to pursue their matrimonial course in tranquility.

But perhaps the fair one's charms have been so powerful as to draw around her a crowd of admirers; and in that case, neither the courtship nor the marriage can be accomplished in a corner. The favoured suitor has almost on every occasion to make his way, either by force or by dint of stratagem, to the door, the window, or whatever place he and his love have appointed as the scene of their meeting. She, pestered by crowds of others (who, though void of hope, still continue to prowl about for the purpose of molesting the more fortunate,) can rarely escape from the house, or admit her lover into it, without being seen, and teased with importunities, or taunted with the name of him upon whom she hath set her heart. In this way, some of the most wonderful hits and misses, escapes and seizures, take place at times, that ever were known in the art of manœuvring; and the intuitive quickness with which she can distinguish the true from the false voice

among many that whisper at her window in the course of an evening, almost exceeds credibility.

Such, in nineteen instances out of twenty, is the mode of courtship among the country people in Scotland; and a practice which would be considered monstrous and most improper in town life, is, in the rural districts of the country, a matter of an ordinary and innocent nature.

The following story, founded on fact, is characteristic of this night-wandering spirit among our countrymen:—

In a purely pastoral district of Dumfriesshire, there lived, about ten years ago, a young shepherd, whom, for the sake of particularity, I shall call Robert Thomson. His father rented one of the large sheep farms into which that part of the country is divided, and his son was entrusted with the "looking of the hill," and the care of his several shepherds.

Robert was young, and from the age of seventeen his time had passed joyfully along, under the influence of a first love. The object of his attachment was half a year younger than himself, and a truly beautiful creature. No fabled Sylvia or Delia ever had any right to compare with her for sweetness of temper, a handsome form, dark locks, and darker eyes, and a face which made every other maiden envious who beheld it. Her name also was a sweet one; at least to a Scottish ear—Agnes Hawthorn. She lived at a distance of four miles into what may be called the interior of the pastoral district, where her father rented also a large sheep farm, bounded on the one side by that of Mr. Thomson. Houses are always thinly scattered in a country of that description, but those of farmers in particular; and with the exception of one that intervened about midway betwixt them, Mr. Hawthorn and Mr. Thomson were nearest neighbours to each other. Two high mountains, with a deep valley between, reared themselves in opposition to Robert's nightly visits to his fair one; but he was an adept in the art of surmounting such obstacles, and, aware of the endearments that awaited him beyond them, he valued not the mosses, the streams, or the rocks, that lay in his path, or whether the night was a clear or a gloomy one.

No place can be desert where a beautiful woman resides; and upon this principle, though the houses around the dwelling of Agnes Hawthorn were "few and far between," hardly a night passed over her head on which her dwelling was not beleaguered by a host of wooers. But Robert Thomson was the "apple of her eye." To him alone she would withdraw the curtain of the window, to whisper that her parents were not sleeping sound enough to permit her to unbar the door, or to ask him if no other youth was lurking near, who might discover her exit from, or his entrance into, the house. This was a most necessary precaution, and one which Robert never failed to use upon every visit—always encompassing the house once or twice before he approached the window, and never pattering upon the glass until he had satisfied himself that no human eye was privy to his movements. But men see not, like cats or owls, in the dark; and Robert, with all his vigilance, was one evening so unfortunate as to be discovered by a party of three other shepherds, who, though all come a-wooing for their "ain hand," had clubbed together for the purpose of watching, when they found their several efforts to gain admittance, or even an answer to their entreaties, in vain.

A peat stack, as is common in such places, was built against one of the gables of the house; and upon a *dais* of it, which was brought a good way down by frequent subtractions for the fire, the watchful triumvirate slyly perched themselves. The colour of the peats and of their clothes happened to be so similar, that discovery was almost impossible, and there had they the pleasure,