

## DARBY AND THE RAM.

'Twas one of those days when the sun in its perpendicular altitude looks at two sides of the hedge at once—a lovely midsummer day—when nature was laughing till her sides ached, and mother earth, in her gayest mood, was lavishing her promises and her smiles to her often ungrateful children, the lambs were skipping to and fro within their enclosed pastures, and the cows, with grave and matron aspect, were lolling in the sun, and ruminating there already gathered repast—everything seemed happy except the Shepherd Darby.

Poor fellow! "A green and yellow melancholy," had settled on his manly cheek; his grief he revealed not, but let "concealment, like a worm i' the bud," prey upon his spirits; he stalked about the field like a ghost, or leaned upon his crook in silent despair.

Lord Amplefield and Squire Buckthorn were riding past to dinner. "I wonder," said his lordship to the squire, "what can be the matter with my shepherd Darby. He seems in a galloping consumption, and were I to lose him, I would not see his like again for many a long day. He is the most honest, steady, careful creature in the world, and never told a lie in his life."

"Never told a lie in his life! Why, my lord, do you really believe such nonsense?"

"Decidedly I do, I know your opinion is not very favorable as to the moral character of our dependents, yet there are some among them not unworthy of trust."

They now advanced nearer, and his lordship held up his whip as a signal, and over bounded Darby. "Well, Darby, that shower we had last night served the pastures."

"It did, my lord, and the cows will give a larger meal, and require milking earlier this evening through means of it."

"Darby, bring over my favorite ram, that this gentleman may see it."

"Yes, my lord. Hallo, Sweeper, away for Ballface." In a few minutes the dog hunted the ram up from the flock. "That's a clever turn, my

worthy," said the squire, "here's half a crown to drink."

"Thanks to your honor," said Darby, "but the worth of that in strong drink will serve me a year, and yet I'll spend it on drink all in one night."

"Explain this riddle, Darby."

"Why, sir, when I feel myself merry enough without it, where's the use in taking it? That stream can slake my thirst as well. Yet I'll not speak for others—many a one there are, who must have strong drink to give them false spirits. On them will I spend it to open their hearts, and make them forget their day's toil."

"You are a worthy fellow, and a philosopher," said Lord Amplefield, with a look of triumph, as he and the squire rode off. "What say you to my shepherd now?"

"A mighty plausible fellow, indeed! Yet proud as you are of him, my lord, I bet a score of sheep that before two days I'll make him tell you a barefaced lie, out and out."

"Done!" said his lordship, the wager was laid, and the squire set out on his LIE-MAKING expedition.

He soon ascertained the cause of Darby's melancholy. There had been a quarrel between him and the girl of his heart, the lovely Cauthleen. Pride prevented a reconciliation, though both would have given the world to be in each other's arms. To her the squire bent his steps, succeeded in drawing out the secret that she loved Darby with a heart and a half, and then artfully upbraiding her with unkindness in neglecting the "worthy young fellow," who was dying for her, contrived to inveigle her, by a series of falsehoods, into a plan to get reconciled to Darby, and while in the height of his happiness, to coax the ram from him. It succeeded next day to admiration—and the laughing girl tript home, leading the animal with a kerchief taken from her snowy bosom.

Darby was now left to solitary reflection. The hour was rapidly approaching when his lordship usually took his round, and he would infallibly miss his favourite ram—what was to be done? To tell a LIE appeared to his honest mind the very essence of degradation—to EQUIVOCATE was meanness ex-