

said, easily persuaded me to fall in with his plan, and we were soon looking down on the Sheiling of old Launcelot Lee, the shepherd of Hetherhope.

It was hidden at the bottom of the high green hills on which we stood, by the shoulder of another that rose close behind it, and such was the undisturbed repose of the hour and the spot, that but for two or three cows lying near the door, and the smoke that curled lazily from the chimney, it might easily have been taken by an imaginative mind, for the shrine of the Genius of the Mountain Solitude.

"It's a stey brae this," said little Elshie Hymers, (for by this time I had learnt his name), "Launsie maun hae something to do to win to the tap o't twice a day, I think. I wonder if he's in yet, or no. He's often unco late; but it's nae matter, yonder's Mabel milking the kye, and it's worth while gangin' a mile or twa out o' anes way onie day, were it but to look on her. Aye, Bess Preston, bonnie though she be, and rightly ca'd the Flower o' Beaumont, is no fit to haud the candle to her! There's Selby o' Philoger, Harry o' the Woodside, and young Preston, the Pethers' son o' Mow-haugh, fit to pu' ane anither's lugs out about her; but she's baith ower guid and ower bonnie for onie o' them, and what's far better, has sense enouch to let them ken sae."

I had been prepared, from the impassioned manner in which little Elshie, in the fullness of his heart had spoken, of the fair Mabel as we descended the hill, to meet with something more than a pretty face; but the vision of female loveliness that now stood before me is as indescribable as the feeling then was overpowering.

The sleeves of her spare short gown were turned up above the elbow, and shewed an arm that might have served as a model for the chisel of an artist. Her clustering, hair, like the wing of the raven, was gathered up in ringlets from her brow, and heightened, by concealing, the hue of a cheek already too fair, whilst her unaffected simplicity added grace to a form whose symmetry I have never yet seen marrowed.

This was nearly forty years ago, and time has made sad work with me since then, but Mabel Lee stands as fair before me now, as that evening when she placed the porringer of rich milk and barley-cake on the table for me in the Mountain Sheiling.

Up in yonder muirlands bare,

Where morning suns wi' mists forgather,

Where breckens bield the hirsels lair,

And scaur and craig are fringed wi' heather.

Sae lown and cozie 'neath the height,

Just whaur the brae the path is speiling,

Among the hills, far out o' sight,

There sweetly stands the Mountain Sheiling.

Its wee kail-yard, wi' bountree braw,
Its humble roof wi' heather happit,
And bank and brae around are a'

Wi' milk-white gowans thickly drappit.

A birk tree grows beside the well,

And close the burnie by is stealing;

The muircock fearless leaves the fell,

And cow'rs about the Mountain Sheiling.

Nae cauldrie warldly pride is there,

Nae upstart awkward kintra breeding,

But a's content wi' hamely fare,

And braw forby in hamespun cleeding.

There friendless want forgets a while

A heartless world's unkindly dealing;

Throws by his rags, and learns to smile

Among them in the Mountain Sheiling.

But ah! its no' the welcome warm

That's met wi' there—nor flocks a feeding

Sae peacefu' round—throws the charm,

The warlock charm about the steading:

It's no' the brae nor birken tree,

Nor yet the burnie by a-stealing,

But bonnie, modest, Mabel Lee,

That wons within the Mountain Sheiling.

Her wee bit waist, a matchless span,

Her tempting lips, than rubies rarer,

Her cheek the rose-bud newly blawn,

And fancy never formed a fairer.

Her step sae light, her e'en sae bright,

Her witching smile sae fu' o' feeling,

Love in her bosom out o' sight,

There nestles in the Mountain Sheiling.

I may be doomed beneath the line

To toil afar, or wander wearie

Where simmer suns but seldom shine,

And no' a friendly heart to cheer me;

And fait-less fortune sair may storm;

But till my heart's bereft o' feeling,

I'll ne'er forget the angel form,

I met within the Mountain Sheiling.

The following was sent with a subscription, and gratitude prevents our selfishly keeping, not only the money, but the verses to ourselves:—

"DEAR SIR,

The money I send for a paper of news,

Is a thing we can't get the moment we choose,

Therefore, you may think I am pretty clever,

And though it be late, *better later than never!*

From your most obedient,

_____."