

that her heart was sore. Old, rugged, eccentric though he was, the secret of that maidenly heart was not hid from the stocking-weaver, and he felt a great rebelling for his bairn. 'Well, I must go, Rob, and ask for wee Nellie at the smith's,' said Sheila. 'Nine bairns, Rob! What would Donald and Mary say if they saw so many crowded into their old house? Mary would call it a "potch," wouldn't she?' Sheila laughed, and Rob's eye twinkled.

'Are ye ridin', my wee leddy?' he asked.

'Yes; don't you know my habit yet, Rob?'

'Maybe; I ken it gars ye look bonnie. Ye are like the straightest birk in Shian woods,' said the stocking-weaver, looking admiringly at the slim yet stately young figure. Sheila laughed again. Her heart had grown lighter. She felt happier than she had done for some months, perhaps because news of the exiles were so near at hand.

'Oh, Rob! you make me quite ashamed. Good-night now; mind and take this before you go to bed. See, I will just make it all ready for you.'

She lifted the lid of the little basket, which Rob sometimes said could find its own way to the Fauld, and took out a dainty little pudding, and a bottle of cream, which she poured into a cup, and set it all ready for Rob, with the spoon and the plate lying to his hand. Had she no prevision, I wonder, of the eyes which watched her through the little window, watched her with a passionate light of love in them which might have stirred her heart? With a kind good-night, at last she gathered up her habit and stepped out of the house. The gloaming had merged into darkness, but there was a big red moon lying behind the hill, the moon the reapers love. Sheila's pony was browsing quietly at the burn-side. She took the bridle loosely over her arm, and, stepping across to the smith's door, asked for the ailing baby. Then, from out the shadows of Rob's corner, a tall figure stepped with one hasty stride and entered the stocking-weaver's door. Rob looked up at the hasty intrusion, and somehow, when his eye fell on the familiar and dearly-loved face, he was not conscious of the surprise so unexpected an apparition might have caused.