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Poetry.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

Is it not passing strange
That fancy oft can build
An edifice beyond the range
Of architects more skill'd?
And freely thought will rise
To form a building fair,
Whose top will reach so near the skies
It soon is lost in air.

No vain foundation's raised
Upon the sickle sand,
Nor can upon a rock be based
What ne'er was joined to land.
But high the castle proud
Stands nobly in mid air
Until when comes a murky cloud
'Tis gone we know not where.

Thus oft in fancy's flight
Will expectations glow,
To form a vision far more bright
Than may be found below
The sun of hope will shine,
The joyful spirits rise,
And both together will combine
To reach the far off skies.

But cold reality
Will come, as 'twere a cloud,
And then hope a brightest sun will be
Enveloped in a shroud.
And breaking every link,
By which they seemed so fair,
Will fond imagination sink
With Castles in the air.

R. H. P.

Yorkville, March 20, 1852.

Literature.

THE LILY OF LIDDISDALE.

(Continued from our last.)

Amy Gordon sat there an hour with the loving, but honourable Boy, and sang many a plaintive tune, and recited many a romantic story. She believed every word she uttered, whether of human lovers, or of the affection of fairies, the silent creatures of the woods and knowes, towards our race. For herself, she felt a constant wild delight in fictions, which to her were all as truths; and she was glad and proud to see how they held in silent attention him at whose request she recited or sang. But now she sprang to her feet, and beseeching him to forgive the freedom she had used in thus venturing to speak so long in such a presence, but at the same remembering that a lock of her hair was near his heart, and perceiving that the little basket she had let him take was half filled with wild flowers, the Lily of Liddisdale made a graceful obeisance, and disappeared. Nor did the youth follow her they had sat together for one delightful hour—and he returned by himself to the Priory.

From this day the trouble of a new delight was in the heart of young Elliot. The spirit of innocence was blended with that of beauty all over Amy, the Shepherdess; and it was their perfect union that the noble Boy so dearly loved. Yet what could she be to him more than a gleam of rainbow-light, a phantom of the woods—an imagination, that

passed away into the silence of the far off green pastoral hills: she belonged almost to another world,—another life. His dwelling, and that of his dreamers was a Princely Hall. She, and all her nameless line, were dwellers in turf built huts. "In other times," thought he, "I might have transplanted that Lily into mine own garden; but these are foolish fancies! Am I in love with poor Amy Gordon the daughter of a Shephard? As those thoughts were passing through his mind, he was bounding along a ridge of hills from which many a sweet vale was visible; and he formed a sudden determination to visit the cottage of Amy's father, which he had seen some years ago pointed out when he was with a gay party of lords and ladies on a visit to the ruins of Hermitage Castle. He bounded like a deer along; and as he descended into a little vale, lo! on a green mound the Lily of Liddisdale herding her sheep!

Amy was half terrified to see him standing in his graceful beauty before her in that solitary place. In a moment her soul was disquieted within her, and she felt that it was indeed love. She wished that she might sink into that verdant mound, from which she vainly strove to rise, as the impassioned youth lay down on the turf at her side, and telling her to fear nothing, called her by a thousand tender and endearing names. Never, till he had seen Amy, had he felt one tremor of love; but now his heart was kindled, and in that utter solitude, when all was so quiet and so peaceful, there seemed to him a preternatural charm over all her character. He burst out into passionate vows and prayers, and called God to witness, that if she would love him, he would forget all distinction of rank, and marry his beautiful Amy, and she should live yet in his own Hall.—The words were uttered, and there was silence. Their echo sounded for a moment strange to his own ears; but he fixed his soul upon her countenance, and repeated them over and over again with wilder emphasis, and more impassioned utterance. Amy was confounded with fear and perplexity; but when she saw him kneeling before her, the meek, innocent, humble girl could not endure the sight, and said, Sir, behold in me one willing to be your servant? Yes, willing is poor Amy Gordon to kiss your feet. I am a poor man's daughter—Oh! sir, you surely came not hither for evil? No—no—evil dwells not in such a shape. Away then—away then—my noble master—for if Walter Harden were to see you!—if my old father knew this, his heart would break!"

Once more they parted. Amy returned home in the evening at the usual hour; but there was no peace now for her soul. Such intense and passionate love had been vowed to her—such winning and delightful expressions whispered into her heart by one so far above her in all things, but who felt no degradation in equalling her to him in the warmth and depth of his affection, that she sometimes strove to think it all but one of her wild dreams awakened by some verse or incident in some old

ballad. But she had felt his kisses on her cheek—his thrilling voice was in her soul—and she was oppressed with a passion, pure it is true, and most innocently humble, but a passion that seemed to be like life itself, never to be overcome, and that could cease only when the heart he had deluded—for what else than delusion could it be?—ceased to beat. Thus agitated, she had directed her way homewards with hurried and heedless steps. She minded not the miry pits—the quivering marshes—and the wet rushy moors. Instead of crossing the little sinuous moorland streams at their narrow places, where her light feet used to bound across them, she waded through them in her feverish anxiety, and sometimes, after hurrying along the braes, she sat suddenly down, breathless, weak, and exhausted, and retraced in weeping bewilderment, all the scene of fear, joy, endearments, caresses, and wild persuasions, from which she had torn herself away, and escaped. On reaching home, she went to her bed trembling and shivering, and drowned in tears—and could scarcely dare, much as she needed comfort, even to say her prayers.—Amy was in a high fever—during the night she became delirious—and her old father sat by her bedside till morning, fearing that he was going to lose his child.

There was grief over the great Strath and all its glens, when the rumour spread over them that Amy Gordon was dying. Her wonderful beauty had but given a tencror and brighter character to the love which her unsullied innocence and simple goodness had universally inspired; and it was felt, even among the sobbing of a natural affection, that if the Lily of Liddisdale should die, something would be taken away of which they were all proud, and from whose lustre there was a diffusion over their own lives. Many a gentle hand touched the closed door of her cottage, and many a low voice enquired how God was dealing with her—but where now was Walter Harden when his Lily was like to fade? He was at her bed's foot, as her father was at its head. Was she not his sister, although she would not be his bride. And when he beheld her glazed eyes wandering unconsciously in delirium, and felt her blood throbbing so rapidly in her beautiful and transparent veins, he prayed to God that Amy might recover, even although her heart were never to be his, even although it were to fly to the bosom of him whose name she constantly kept repeating in her wandering fantasies. For Amy, although she sometimes kindly whispered the name of Walter Harden, and asked why her brother came not to see her on her death-bed, yet far oftener spoke beseechingly and passionately of that other youth, and implored him to break not the heart of a poor simple Shepherdess who was willing to kiss his feet.

Neither the Father of poor Amy nor Walter Harden had known before that she had ever seen young George Elliot—but they soon understood, from the innocent distraction of her speech, that the noble boy had left the Lily he loved, and Walter said: alonged not to that line ever to injure the helpless.