

## LINES.

"The heavens declare the glory of God."

Ye mighty spheres, in ceaseless order rolling  
Around the eternal Power from whom ye came,  
Of him, the all-creative, all-controlling,  
The majesty and glory ye proclaim!

Bright stars, in this poor world in beauty gleaming,  
He out of gloomy chaos bade you rise!  
His spirit, on the abyss of darkness beaming,  
Conceived your forms and led you to the skies.

What eye hath seen the limits of your dwelling?  
What ear hath heard your mystic melody?  
And who can tell what orbs, e'en you excelling,  
Adorn the bosom of infinity?

These are thy glories, everlasting Being,  
There are thy works, mysterious Deity!  
And yet thou condescendest, God all-seeing,  
To smile upon a trembling worm like me!

Clearspring, Md.

J. M. J.

## THE WOOL-GATHERER.

BY THE ETRICK SHEPHERD.

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Robin the farmer was hurt in the tenderest part that day when his laird went by his door, and took shelter in the wool-gatherer's cot; and, on going in, he mentioned it in such a way, that his old-maiden sister, Meg, took note of it, and circulated it among the men-servants, with strong injunctions of secrecy. Little wist the old lady of what was going on! She dreamed not once of a beautiful stranger among the cottagers at Todburn (the name of Robin's farm), that was working such delay, else woe would have been to her and all concerned. At length, however, by an accidental circumstance, she did hear of Lindsey's proceedings, and forthwith took it upon her to order Robin to turn the fair unknown and her infant out of their humble residence. All this, of course, was done without the knowledge of the young laird.

"We must now follow the fortunes of the ejected wool-gatherer. Distressed beyond measure with being summarily ordered to leave the spot, she tied a few necessaries of clothing in a bundle, and carrying that and little George with her, bade farewell to Todburn. As with a heavy heart, and tears running down her cheeks, she bent her way with her burden, she was noticed by a youth named Barnaby, a lad who herded a few sheep for Robin, and possessed an inexhaustible fund of good nature. 'What ails you, Jeany?' said he; 'where are you gaun this wild gait. Hae ye been obliged to leave your ain wee house for want o' meat?' 'I had plenty of meat,' replied Jeany, 'but your master has turned me out of my cot at an hour's warning; he would not even suffer me to remain overnight, and I know of no place to which I can go.'

'O, the auld hard-heartit loon! Heard ever ony body the like o' that? What ailed him at ye? Hae ye done ony thing, Jeany, or said ony thing wrang?' 'It is that which distresses me. I have not been given to know my offence, and I can form no conjecture of it.'

'If I had a hame, Jeany, ye should hae a share o't. I dinna ken o' ane I wad make mair welcome, even though I should seek a bed for mysel. War ye at my father's cottage, I could insure you a month's good hamely lodging, but it is far away, an' a wild road till't. If ye like, I'll gang that length wi' ye, an' try if he'll put ye up a while till we see how matters turn.' Jane was now so much confused, that, not being able to form any better plan for the present, she arose and followed her ragged conductor.

Passing over the narration of the journey, in quest of the proposed temporary home, we take up the story at the point where the wanderers approach the cottage of Barnaby's father. Strangers seldom approached that sequestered spot—passengers never. While yet at a good distance, the travellers saw Barnaby's mother standing at the end of the cottage, watching their approach, and they heard her calling distinctly to her husband, 'Aigh! von's our aye Barny, I ken by auld Help's motions; but wha she is that he's bringing wi' him, is ayont my comprehension.'

She hurried away in to put her fire-side in some order, and nought was then to be seen but two or three bare-headed boys, with their hair the colour of peat-ashes, setting their heads always now and then by the corner of the house, and vanishing again in a twinkling. The old shepherd was sitting on his divot-seat, without the door, mending a shoe. Barnaby strode up to him. 'How are ye the night, father?'

'No that ill, Barny lad—is that you? How are ye yoursel?' said a decent-looking middle-aged man, scratching his head at the same time with the awl, and fixing his eyes, not on his son, but on the companion that he had brought with him. When he saw her so young, so beautiful, and the child in her arms, the inquiring look that he cast on his son was unutterable. Silence reigned for the space of a minute. Barnaby made holes in the ground with his staff—the old shepherd began again to sew his shoe, and little George prattled to his mamma. 'An' how hae ye been sin' we saw ye, Barny?' 'Gaylys.' 'I think ye hae brought twa young strangers wi' ye?' 'I wat have I.' 'Whar fell ye in wi' them?' 'I want to speak a word to you, father.' The old shepherd flung down his work, and followed his son round the corner of the house. It was not two minutes till he came back. Jane had sat down on the sod-seat.

'This is a pleasant evening,' said he, addressing her.

'It is a very sweet evening,' was the reply. 'Ye'll be weary; ye had better gang in an' rest ye.' She thanked him, and was preparing to go. 'It's a muckle matter,' continued he, 'when folk can depend on their ain. My Barny never deceived me a' his life, an' ye are as welcome here as heart can mak ye. The flower in May is nae welcomer than ye are to this bit shieling, and your share of a' that's in it. Come your ways in, my bonny woman, an' think nae shame. Ye shall never be lookit on as either a beggar or borrower here, but just ane o' oursel.' So saying, he took her hand in both his, and led her into the house. 'Wife, here's a young stranger our son has brought to bide a while wi' ye; mak her welcome i' the mean time, an' we'll be better acquaintit by and bye.' 'In troth I sal e'en do sae. Come awa in by to the muckle chair. Whar is he himsel, the muckle duddy fettered goulk?' It was a happy evening; the conversation was interesting, and kept up till a late hour; and when the old couple learned from Jane of the benevolent disinterested part that their son had acted, their eyes glowed with delight, and their hearts waxed kinder and kinder. Before they retired to rest, the old shepherd performed family worship, with a glow of devotional warmth which Jane had never before witnessed in man. The whole economy of the family was of that simple and primitive cast, that the dwellers in a large city never dream of as existing. There was to be seen contentment without affluence or ambition, benevolence without ostentation, and piety without hypocrisy; but at the same time such a mixture of gaiety, good sense, and superstitious ideas, blended together in the same minds, as was altogether inscrutable. It was a new state of existence to our fair stranger, and she resolved to prove it to the best advantage.

But we must now leave her in her new habitation, and return with Barnaby to the families of Earhall and Todburn. Lindsey went up the water every day fishing as he had done formerly, but was astonished at observing from day to day, that his fair wool-gatherer's cottage was locked, and no smoke issuing from it. At first he imagined that she might have gone on a visit, but at length began to suspect that some alteration had taken place in her circumstances; and the anxiety that he felt to have some intelligence, whether that change was favourable or the reverse, was such that he himself wondered at it. He turned his eyes to the other cottages and to the farm-house, but lacked the courage to go boldly up to any of them, and ask after the object of his thoughts. An accidental meeting with Barnaby soon revealed the mystery. His sense of justice was now roused, and his feelings at once suggested that reparation should be made to the injured party. Calling Robin before him, and reproving him for his harshness, he warned him, that if the young woman

was not found and restored to her rights in less than a fortnight, he need not be surprised if he were some day removed on as short a notice.

Robin felt that he had got himself into a serious dilemma. That night, before he dismissed his servants to their beds, he said, 'Lads, my master informs me that I am to be plaguit wi' the law for putting away that lassie Jeany an' her bit brat atween term days. I gio ye a' your liberty frae my wark until the end o' neist week, if she be not found afore that time, to search for her; and whoever finds her, and brings her back to her cottage, shall have a reward o' twenty guineas in his loof.'

A long conversation then ensued on the best means of recovering her; but Barnaby did not wait on this, but hastened away to the stable loft, where his chest stood at the head of his bed, dressed himself in his Sunday clothes, and went without delay to the nearest stage where horses were let out for hire, got an old brown hack equipped with a bridle, saddle, and pad, and off he set directly for his father's cottage, where he arrived next morning by the time the sun was up. Safely did he reach the glen, at the head of which his father's cottage stood, with its little kail-yard in the forkings of the burn; there was no dog, nor even little noisy pup, came out to give note of his approach, for his father and canine friends had all gone out to the heights at a very early hour to look after the sheep. The morning was calm and lovely; but there was no sound in the glen save the voice of his mother's grey cock, who was perched on the kail-yard dyke, and crowing incessantly. The smoke was issuing from his mother's chimney in a tall blue spire that reached to the middle of the hill: but when there, it spread itself into a soft hazy cloud, and was resting on the side of the green brae in the most still and moveless position. The rising sun kissed it with his beams, which gave it a light woolly appearance, something like floating down; it was so like a vision that Barnaby durst scarcely look at it. 'My mother's astoor,' said he to himself, 'I ken by her morning rock; she'll be working up an' down the house, an' putting a' things to rights; an' my billies they'll be lying grumpling and snoring i' their dens, an' Jeany will be lying waking, listening what's gaun on, an' wee George will be sniffing an' sleeping sound in her bosom.'

Jane was very happy at meeting with her romantic and kind-hearted Barnaby again, who told her such a true account of her affairs had taken in her favour, and all that the laird had said to him about her, and the earnest inquiries he had made, and likewise how he had put Robin to his shifts. She had lived very happy with these poor honest people, and had no mind to leave them; indeed, from the day that she entered their house, she had not harboured a thought of it; but now, on account of her furniture, which was of considerable value to her, and more particularly for the sake of Barnaby's reward, she judged it best to accompany him. So, after they had all taken a hearty breakfast together, at the same board, the old Shepherd returned thanks to the Bestower of all good things, and then kissing Jane, he lifted her on the horse behind his son.

As soon as Lindsey heard that Jane and her child George had arrived safely at their cottage, he resolved on having the mystery cleared up that hung over the unfortunate pair. They were asked to dinner at the Hall, along with Robin and his sister Meg, and an opportunity was given for Jane to tell the incidents of her life.

'The events of my life, sir,' said she, 'have been, like the patriarch's days, few and evil, and my intention was, never to have divulged them in this district—not on my own account, but for the sake of their names that are connected with my history, and are now no more. Nevertheless, since you have taken such an interest in my fortunes, it would both be ungrateful and imprudent to decline giving you that satisfaction. Excuse me for the present in withholding my family name, and I will relate to you the incidents of my short life in a very few words.'

'My father was an eminent merchant. Whether ever he was a rich one or not, I cannot tell, but he certainly was looked upon as such, for his credit and dealings were very extensive. My mother died twelve years ago, leav-