

**MIELDENVOLD, THE STUDENT;
OR, THE PILGRIMAGE THROUGH
NORTHUMBERLAND, DURHAM,
BERWICKSHIRE, AND THE
ADJACENT COUNTIES**

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Mieldenvold, the Student; Or, the Pilgrimage through Northumberland, Durham, Berwickshire, and the Adjacent Counties by Frederick Sheldon

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FREDERICK SHELDON

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THE

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THROUGH

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B E R W I C K S H I R E ,

AND

T H E A D J A C E N T C O U N T I E S .

B Y F R E D E R I C K S H E L D O N .

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DURHAM.

1843.

PREFACE TO MIELDENVOLD.

THE following Poems will need but little Preface—“but little shall I say to grace my speech”: a “poor player” would fain exchange his present unprofitable profession for something of a more permanent nature.

In the following narrative much will be found fault with, and some portions of it may deserve praise.

The first canto is merely to shew the danger that may accrue from a young and ardent mind—enthusiastic to a degree—indulging in those gay dreams of imagination and castle building, which the student is too often led into by the unbounded reins given to a luxurious imagination.

He had abjured the world, and in its stead
He did create, &c.

As a talented author has justly observed—“The habit of what, in common parlance, is termed ‘castle building,’ has a most pernicious influence on the health of the mind. There is a legitimate exercise of the imaginative faculty which is advantageous to the understanding, and to this no reasonable objection can be urged. But when the fancy is allowed to ‘body forth the forms of things unknown,’ much evil will result. Many habituate themselves to

dream with their eyes open, without their senses being literally shut. This condition of mind, borders closely upon the confines of insanity."

The Second Part is a paraphrase of a tale I some years ago read in "Blackwood's Magazine," ascribed, I know not with what truth, to Professor Wilson. I have endeavoured to pourtray the feelings of a shipwrecked man struggling with strong mental hallucination.

The Third Part is likewise a literal paraphrase from a fragment by a talented writer, of whom, and of the above-mentioned gentleman, I ask pardon for my literary plunder.

For the Scenes in Northumberland and elsewhere touched upon, they have nothing to do with the Poem — just as much as Childe Harold has to do with his Pilgrimage. They were each written on the spot; for in most of the towns and villages described, I have "strutted my hour upon the stage," and "made myself a motley to the view."

To the nobility and gentlemen of Northumberland, I am under great obligations, especially to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, who, with a modesty only equalled by his charity, has more than once aided me, not for my Poem's sake, which makes my gratitude the more overflowing.

To all subscribers I return thanks, as well as to those who may hereafter purchase the book.

Berwick, June, 1843.

TO THE CHEVIOTS.

Yes, 'tis the same—the wind of Heaven blows
Around those hills kist by the lightnings' cloud,
As rude as those where Patriot Tell arose—
Beneath whose shafts the might of Austria bowed.
To the bright sky yet rise those dark blue hills,
Barren of verdure, save their native heath;
'Mid beds of granite gush their native rills,
And Liberty from wild flowers culls her wreath.

Winter hath swathed your towering heads in snow,
The frost hath bound your rills in icy belt;
Mankind have felt the change which seasons prove,
But Time on thee expends his rage unfelt.
Still as ye were, still do ye proudly rise,
Bound to your rocky beds, your stony feet,
Based in the valleys—and the fickle skies
Kiss your bald crests with sunbeams or with sleet.

How have I lived, since last I saw your forms
From out my casement—home of early youth!
Since then, my path has been obscured by storms,
And I have battled with woe, toil, and ruth;
But still my heart exulting bounds to thee,
Around whose breast the light'ning plays in mirth;
Whate'er my state, my spirit still is free
As when first Nature framed it at my birth.

She is my mother, and my only one ;
 The one that bare me long hath ceased to live—
 Cold, cold her heart, her earthly toil is done ;
 Must we not die, and yet perforce I grieve,—
 I grieve for home and friends—for kindred smiles,
 To hear my name pronounced in loving tone ;
 Remembered friends, with knavery's dark wiles,
 Ring in my ears in wild and wailing moan.

But on the mountain's top where raves the wind,
 And the free storm speeds onward in its might—
 These, these are objects fitted to my mind ;
 I love their sound and revel in the fight.
 I am thy child, Oh, Nature !—and to thee
 I give a reckless offspring's offering.
 Whate'er I am, my soul, my limbs are free ;
 And to thy glades I do in fondness cling.

Oh cast me not off—for man hath sickened me ;
 That cursed love for gold hath damn'd his soul,—
 Where'er he haunts no love can ever be ;
 That devil, mammon, keeps all 'neath controul,
 And like an eagle do I speed to thee.
 Thy mountains, rocks, rude dells and roaring streams,
 Thy woods of gloom my dwelling aye should be ;
 There would I pass away my time in dreams.

My nature is not harsh—the world hath turn'd
 My sweetness into gall ; and I will wage
 A deadly war on it—my spirits yearned,
 And when I sought for love I met stern rage.
 Let life flow on—for me these mountains bleak,
 Had I my wish, should ever be my home,
 Until I changed it for the grave I seek,
 When Death has struck and seal'd my earthly doom.

INTRODUCTION TO MILDENVOLD.

Good reader, pause awhile, with patient face,
Make up your mind to wade through seas of rhyme,
Dull and prosaic as a Wesleyan grace ;
A murd'rous way of killing mortal time.
The poor player, in his leisure hours,
Has framed these lines to meet the public eye ;
Perchance among the weeds you'll find some flowers,
Cherish them, or else, alack ! they die.

Mahomet, they say, he wrote the holy Coran ;
The Turks affirm it—so it must be true.
Witness his life from Mecca unto Oran,
He penn'd their manual with a selfish view ;
To get himself a place secure on high,
He acted wrong—I think,—I'm but a learner ;
Because a place in heaven you cannot buy
As captains their commissions do on *terra firma*.

I think, instead of writing balderdash,
Of Houris, Paradise, and such dull stuff,
Together making such a Turkish clash,
That to an Englishman 'tis *quantum suff*.

Instead of this, I think, 'twould been much better,
 If he some charitable dome had founded
 For madmen, idiots, widow, maid, or debtor,—
 I think his fame abroad would more have sounded.

That is the way our modern nobles act,
 By gout or rheumatism (fortune's coupled mate),
 Or riotous living—nay, it is a fact—
 They bring their bodies very near Death's gate,
 Now unprepared—with pale fear trembling o'er ;
 Before like porpoises in wealth they wallowed,
 They build their temples hovering on three score—
 And so abjure the rakish life they followed.

Or else they found a school for electricity,
 Or to some college leave their books of lore ;
 Thus making merit of necessity,
 Leaving what they have no further use for.
 'Tis like the sordid miser in the fable,—
 Who dying, lay, and struggling, gasp'd for breath ;
 He clung to hope and life whilst was he able,
 And left his gold when ta'en himself by Death.

But God forbid I slandered noble classes—
 Condemning all for faults of two or three ;
 There yet are titled lads and golden lasses,
 Benevolent and wise—as fair as free.
 I mean to write a something three parts long ;
 The scene is laid in England, France, or so ;—
 In the nineteenth century—I may be wrong ;
 Say—should I a little earlier backward go ?