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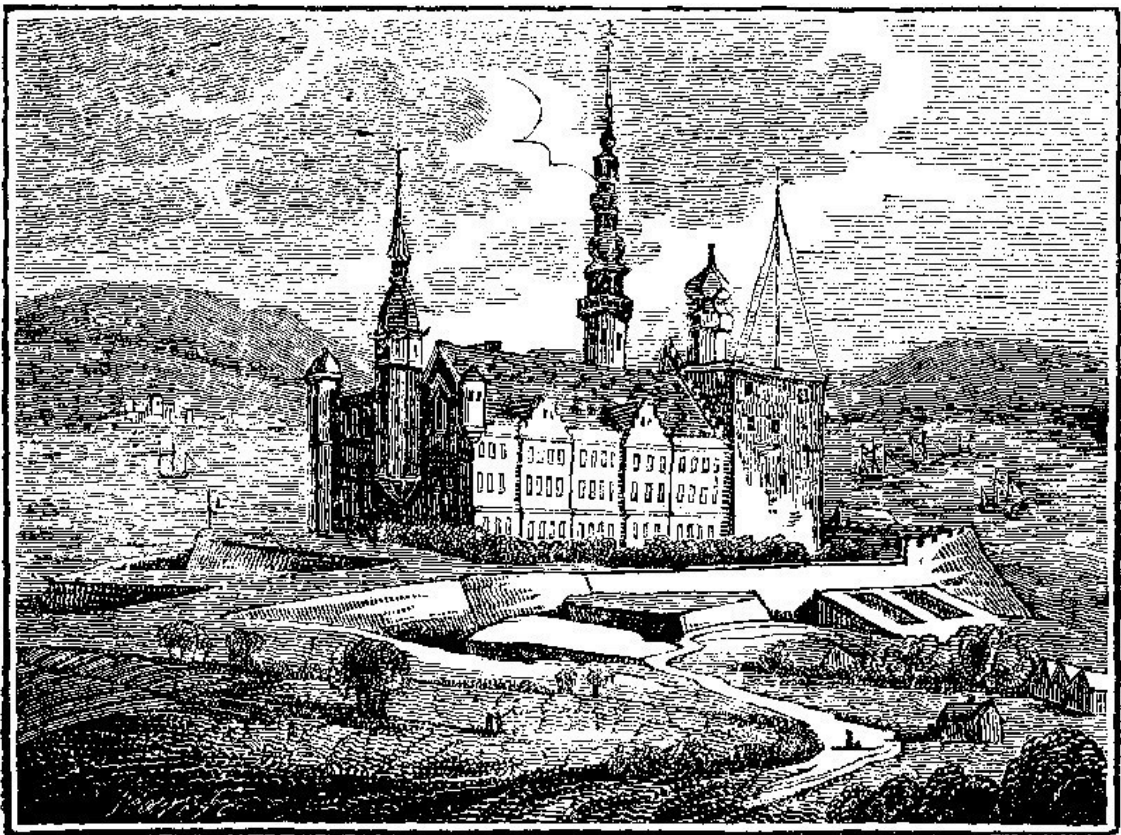
Содержание

Illustrations of Shakspeare	5
NO. XIII. ELSINEUR, FROM HAMLET'S GARDEN	5
ON THE APPEARANCE OF AN AURORA BOREALIS, ON THE NIGHT OF THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER	7
THE SELECTOR, AND LITERARY NOTICES OF NEW WORKS	8
CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE	8
The Two Drovers	9
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	13

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Illustrations of Shakspeare

NO. XIII. ELSINEUR, FROM HAMLET'S GARDEN



We augur that the above will prove one of the most interesting of our Shakspearian Illustrations, inasmuch as the garden where Hamlet was wont to revel in the fitful dreams of his philosophic melancholy, is holy ground. "The lapse of ages and the fables of the poet," says a delighted visiter, "were all lost in the reality of Shakspeare's painting: the moment of his scene seemed present with me; and eager to traverse every part of this consecrated ground, I had already followed Hamlet every where; I had measured the deep shadows of the platform, encountered the grey ghost of the Royal Dane, had killed Polonius in the queen's closet, and drowned poor Ophelia in the willowed stream. The modern aspect of Elsineur is, however, far from inviting, and not a single vestige presents itself that bears the smallest trace of this town ever having been hallowed by the mausoleum of an Ophelia, or proudly decorated with the stately walls of a royal palace."

About a mile from the town is a place that bears the name of Hamlet's garden. Here is no relic of ancient interest, excepting the tradition, which affirms that to be the spot where once stood the Danish palace, and where was enacted that tragedy, which has been so gloriously immortalized by the genius of our great dramatic bard.

The present edifice is erected on the brow of a gently rising hill, the summit of which is gained by means of a winding walk cut through a small shrubbery. In the surrounding prospect, the town of Elsineur, on the plain beneath, presents itself ill-built, red, and without any public building, or spire, to vary its sameness. Far to the left of the city stands the castle of Kronenberg, a bold and fine feature; the waves of the Cattegut roll at its feet; and are bounded on the opposite side by the Swedish coast. When the annexed sketch was made, 400 sail of merchants' ships were lying there at anchor, which added greatly to the interest of the picture. The small village on the distant shore is Elsenberg. The forest of Kronenberg is indeed proudly situated; the form of the building, with its spires and minarets, is nobly picturesque; the fabric is of grey stone; and its innumerable windows, varied towers, and other architectural ornaments, make it a striking and beautiful contrast to the dull uniformity of the town.

Sir Robert Ker Porter, in his visit to this sacred spot, collected a few interesting circumstances at the fountain-head, relating to Shakspeare's northern hero, from the very source whence our poet must have drawn the incidents of his tragedy, viz. the "Annals of Denmark," written by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century. The work is in Latin, and in our next number we intend inserting a short abstract of Hamlet's story. It will be curious to compare the dialogues of the original with their counterpart in the play.

ON THE APPEARANCE OF AN AURORA BOREALIS, ON THE NIGHT OF THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER

BY A LADY IN HER THIRTEENTH YEAR

(For the Mirror.)

What may this mean? this ruddy blaze of light,
Breaking effulgent through the stilly night;
Darting its blood-red form along the sky,
Glowing with heaven's glorious majesty.
How with its phalaxy of rays unfurl'd,
It comes: its radiance circling all our mother world.
The pharos of the night; where gods might dance.
Heedless of mortals dull, unmeaning trance;
Where spirits in their mysteries might find,
A sail to float upon the yielding wind;
But see, it flies, its shadow; form outspread,
In fainting radiance o'er earth's startled bed,
Yet rests, like the death gleam of beauty's eye,
Or last rich tint of an autumnal sky.
And now in fleecy clouds the heav'ns appear.
Again it darts, dreamer, there's naught to fear;
Again, like a proud spirit of the sky,
Though conquer'd, breaking forth in majesty.
Britain, for thee this fearful warning sent,
Oh! mock not foolishly its dire portent;
For now that vice on all her malice wreaks,
Charms on the stage, and in the assembly speaks;
Now that with cheating fires she shameless dares,
Fortunate where virtue once defied her snares;
Again I say, for thee this warning sent,
Oh! mark it well, mock not its dire portent.

F.J.H.

THE SELECTOR, AND LITERARY NOTICES OF *NEW WORKS*

CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE

(By the author of *Waverley*.)

[We have the pleasure of submitting to our readers, (almost entire,) one of the stories of the forthcoming *Chronicles of the Canongate*, it being the second narrative, and the last in the first volume, and as well as the others, founded on true incidents. The *Chronicles* are domestic tales; but the *Two Drovers* should not be taken as a specimen of the work. Slender as are its incidents, it proves that "Richard (or Walter) is himself again," for in no vein of writing is the author of *Waverley* more felicitous than in delineating scenes of actual life, splendid as are his narratives of the fairy scenes and halls of romance: and in the prevailing taste for this description of writing, we think the *Chronicles of the Canongate* bid fair to enjoy popularity equal to any of Sir Walter's previous productions.]

The Two Drovers

It was the day after the Doune Fair when my story commences. It had been a brisk market, several dealers had attended from the northern and midland counties in England, and the English money had flown so merrily about as to gladden the hearts of the Highland farmers. Many large droves were about to set off for England, under the protection of their owners, or of the topsmen whom they employed in the tedious, laborious and responsible office of driving the cattle for many hundred miles, from the market where they had been purchased, to the fields or farm-yards where they were to be fattened for the shambles.

Of the number who left Doune in the morning, and with the purpose we have described, not a *Gluamie* of them all cocked his bonnet more briskly, or gartered his tartan hose under knee over a pair of more promising *spiogs* (legs), than did Robin Oig M'Combich, called familiarly Robin Oig, that is Young, or the Lesser, Robin. Though small of stature, as the epithet Oig implies, and not very strongly limbed, he was as light and alert as one of the deer of his mountains. He had an elasticity of step, which, in the course of a long march, made many a stout fellow envy him; and the manner in which he busked his plaid and adjusted his bonnet, argued a consciousness that so smart a John Highlandman as himself would not pass unnoticed among the Lowland lasses. The ruddy cheek, red lips, and white teeth, set off a countenance which had gained by exposure to the weather, a healthful and hardy rather than a rugged hue. If Robin Oig did not laugh, or even smile frequently, as indeed is not the practice among his countrymen, his bright eyes usually gleamed from under his bonnet with an expression of cheerfulness ready to be turned into mirth.

The departure of Robin Oig was an incident in the little town, in and near which he had many friends male and female. He was a topping person in his way, transacted considerable business on his own behalf, and was intrusted by the best farmers in the Highlands, in preference to any other drover in that district. He might have increased his business to any extent had he condescended to manage it by deputy; but except a lad or two, sister's sons of his own, Robin rejected the idea of assistance, conscious, perhaps how much his reputation depended upon his attending in person to the practical discharge of his duty in every instance. He remained, therefore, contented with the highest premium given to persons of his description, and comforted himself with the hopes that a few journeys to England might enable him to conduct business on his own account, in a manner becoming his birth. For Robin Oig's father, Lachlan M'Combich, (or, *son of my friend*, his actual clan surname being M'Gregor,) had been so called by the celebrated Rob Roy, because of the particular friendship which had subsisted between the grandsire of Robin and that renowned cateran. Some people even say, that Robin Oig derived his Christian name from a man, as renowned in the wilds of Lochlomond, as ever was his namesake Robin Hood, in the precincts of merry Sherwood. "Of such ancestry," as James Boswell says, "who would not be proud?" Robin Oig was proud accordingly; but his frequent visits to England and to the Lowlands had given him tact enough to know that pretensions, which still gave him a little right to distinction in his own lonely glen, might be both obnoxious and ridiculous if preferred elsewhere. The pride of birth, therefore, was like the miser's treasure, the secret subject of his contemplation, but never exhibited to strangers as a subject of boasting.

Many were the words of gratulation and goodluck which were bestowed on Robin Oig. The judges commended his drove, especially the best of them, which were Robin's own property. Some thrust out their snuff-mulls for the parting pinch—others tendered the *doch-an-dorrach*, or parting cup. All cried—"Good-luck travel out with you and come home with you.—Give you luck in the Saxon market—brave notes in the *leabhar-dhu*, (black pocket-book,) and plenty of English gold in the *sporrán* (pouch of goat-skin.)"

The bonny lasses made their adieus more modestly, and more than one, it was said, would have given her best brooch to be certain that it was upon her that his eye last rested as he turned towards his road.

Robin Oig had just given the preliminary "*Hoo-hoo!*" to urge forward the loiterers of the drove, when there was a cry behind him.

"Stay, Robin—bide a blink. Here is Janet of Tomahourich—auld Janet, your father's sister."

"Plague on her, for an auld Highland witch and spaewife," said a farmer from the Carse of Stirling; "she'll cast some of her cantrips on the cattle."

"She canna do that," said another sapient of the same profession—"Robin Oig is no the lad to leave any of them, without tying Saint Mungo's knot on their tails, and that will put to her speed the best witch that ever flew over Dimayet upon a broomstick."

It may not be indifferent to the reader to know, that the Highland cattle are peculiarly liable to be *taken*, or infected, by spells and witchcraft, which judicious people guard against by knitting knots of peculiar complexity on the tuft of hair which terminates the animal's tail.

But the old woman who was the object of the farmer's suspicion, seemed only busied about the drover, without paying any attention to the flock. Robin, on the contrary, appeared rather impatient of her presence.

"What auld-world fancy," he said, "has brought you so early from the ingle-side this morning, Muhme? I am sure I bid you good even, and had your God-speed, last night."

"And left me more siller than the useless old woman will use till you come back again, bird of my bosom," said the sibyl. "But it is little I would care for the food that nourishes me, or the fire that warms me, or for God's blessed sun itself, if aught but weal should happen to the grandson of my father. So let me walk the *deasil* round you, that you may go safe out into the far foreign land, and come safe home."

Robin Oig stopped, half embarrassed, half laughing, and signing to those around that he only complied with the old woman to soothe her humour. In the meantime, she traced around him, with wavering steps, the propitiation, which some have thought has been derived from the Druidical mythology. It consists, as is well known, in the person who makes the *deasil*, walking three times round the person who is the object of the ceremony, taking care to move according to the course of the sun. At once, however, she stopped short, and exclaimed, in a voice of alarm and horror, "Grandson of my father, there is blood on your hand." "Hush, for God's sake, aunt," said Robin Oig; "you will bring more trouble on yourself with this Taishataragh (second sight) than you will be able to get out of for many a day."

The old woman only repeated, with a ghastly look, "There is blood on your hand, and it is English blood. The blood of the Gael is richer and redder. Let us see—let us—"

Ere Robin Oig could prevent her, which, indeed, could only have been by positive violence, so hasty and peremptory were her proceedings, she had drawn from his side the dirk which lodged in the folds of his plaid, and held it up, exclaiming, although the weapon gleamed clear and bright in the sun, "Blood, blood—Saxon blood again. Robin Oig M'Combich, go not this day to England!"

"Prutt, trutt," answered Robin Oig, "that will never do neither—it would be next thing to running the country. For shame, Muhme—give me the dirk. You cannot tell by the colour the difference betwixt the blood of a black bullock and a white one, and you speak of knowing Saxon from Gaelic blood. All men have their blood from Adam, Muhme. Give me my skenedhu, and let me go on my road. I should have been half way to Stirling brig by this time—Give me my dirk, and let me go."

"Never will I give it to you," said the old woman—"Never will I quit my hold on your plaid, unless you promise me not to wear that unhappy weapon."

The women around him urged him also, saying few of his aunt's words fell to the ground; and as the Lowland farmers continued to look moodily on the scene, Robin Oig determined to close it at any sacrifice.

"Well, then," said the young drover, giving the scabbard of the weapon to Hugh Morrison, "you Lowlanders care nothing for these freats. Keep my dirk for me. I cannot give it you, because it was my father's; but your drove follows ours, and I am content it should be in your keeping, not in mine. Will this do, Muhme?"

"It must", said the old woman—"that is, if the Lowlander is mad enough to carry the knife."

The strong westlandman laughed aloud.

"Good wife," said he, "I am Hugh Morrison from Glenae, come of the Manly Morrisons of auld langsyne, that never took short weapon against a man in their lives. And neither needed they; they had their broadswords, and I have this bit supple (showing a formidable cudgel)—for dirking ower the board, I leave that to John Highlandman. Ye needna snort, none of you Highlanders, and you in especial, Robin. I'll keep the bit knife, if you are feared for the auld spae-wife's tale, and give it back to you whenever you want it."

Robin was not particularly pleased with some part of Hugh Morrison's speech; but he had learned in his travels more patience than belonged to his Highland constitution originally, and he accepted the service of the descendant of the Manly Morrisons, without finding fault with the rather depreciating manner in which it was offered.

"If he had not had his morning in his head, and been but a Dumfries-shire hog into the boot, he would have spoken more like a gentleman. But you cannot have more of a sow but a grumph. It's a shame my father's knife should ever slash a haggis for the like of him."

Thus saying, (but saying it in Gaelic,) Robin drove on his cattle, and waved farewell to all behind him. He was in the greater haste, because he expected to join at Falkirk a comrade and brother in profession, with whom he proposed to travel in company.

Robin Oig's chosen friend was a young Englishman, Harry Wakefield by name, well known at every northern market, and in his way as much famed and honoured as our Highland driver of bullocks. He was nearly six feet high, gallantly formed to keep the rounds at Smithfield, or maintain the ring at a wrestling-match; and although he might have been overmatched, perhaps, among the regular professors of the Fancy, yet as a chance customer, he was able to give a bellyful to any amateur of the pugilistic art. Doncaster races saw him in his glory, betting his guinea, and generally successfully; nor was there a main fought in Yorkshire, the feeders being persons of celebrity, at which he was not to be seen, if business permitted. But though a *sprack* lad, and fond of pleasure and its haunts, Harry Wakefield was steady, and not the cautious Robin Oig M'Combich himself was more attentive to the main chance. His holidays were holidays indeed; but his days of work were dedicated to steady and persevering labour. In countenance and temper, Wakefield was the model of Old England's merry yeomen, whose clothyard shafts, in so many hundred battles, asserted her superiority over the nations, and whose good sabres, in our own time, are her cheapest and most assured defence. His mirth was readily excited; for, strong in limb and constitution, and fortunate in circumstances, he was disposed to be pleased with every thing about him; and such difficulties as he might occasionally encounter, were, to a man of his energy, rather matter of amusement than serious annoyance. With all the merits of a sanguine temper, our young English drover was not without his defects. He was irascible, and sometimes to the verge of being quarrelsome; and perhaps not the less inclined to bring his disputes to a pugilistic decision, because he found few antagonists able to stand up to him in the boxing-ring.

It is difficult to say how Henry Wakefield and Robin Oig first became intimates; but it is certain a close acquaintance had taken place betwixt them, although they had apparently few common topics of conversation or of interest, so soon as their talk ceased to be of bullocks. Robin Oig, indeed, spoke the English language rather imperfectly upon any other topics but stots and kyloes, and Harry

Wakefield could never bring his broad Yorkshire tongue to utter a single word of Gaelic. It was in vain Robin spent a whole morning, during a walk over Minch-Moor, in attempting to teach his companion to utter, with true precision, the shibboleth *Llhu*

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