

LITERATURE, &c.

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BRUNTFIELD.

A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

THE war carried on in Scotland, by the friends and enemies of Queen Mary, after her departure into England, was productive of an almost complete dissolution of order, and laid the foundation of many feuds, which were kept up by private families and individuals, long after all political cause of hostility had ceased. Among the most remarkable quarrels which history or tradition has recorded as arising out of that civil broil, I know of none so deeply cherished or accompanied by so many romantic and peculiar circumstances, as one which took place between two old families of gentry in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Stephen Bruntfield, laird of Craighouse, had been a zealous and disinterested partizan of the Queen. Robert Moubray of Barnbogle, was the friend successively of Murray and Morton, and distinguished himself very highly in their cause. During the year 1572, when Edinburgh Castle was maintained by Kirkaldy of Grange, in behalf of the Queen, Stephen Bruntfield held out Craighouse in the same interest and suffered a siege from a detachment of the forces of the Regent, commanded by the laird of Barnbogle. This latter Baron, a man of fierce and brutal nature, entered life as a younger brother, and at an early period chose to cast his fate among the Protestant leaders, with the view of improving his fortune. The death of his elder brother in rebellion at Langside, enabled the Regent Murray to reward his services with a grant of the patrimonial estate, of which he did not scruple to take possession by the strong hand, to the exclusion of his infant niece, the daughter of the late proprietor. Some incidents which occurred in the course of the war, had inspired a mutual hatred of the most intense character into the breasts of Bruntfield and Moubray; and it was therefore with a feeling of strong personal animosity, as well as of political rancour, that the latter undertook the task of watching the motions of Bruntfield at Craighouse. Bruntfield, after holding out for many months, was obliged, along with his friends in Edinburgh Castle, to yield to the party of the Regent. Like Kirkaldy, and Maitland of Lethington, he surrendered upon a promise of life and estate; but while his two friends perished, one by the hand of the executioner, the other by his own hand, he fell a victim to the sateless spite of his personal enemy, who, in conducting him to Edinburgh as a prisoner, took fire at some bitter expression on the part of the captive, and smote him dead upon the spot.

Bruntfield left a widow and three infant sons. The lady of Craighouse had been an intimate of the unfortunate Mary, from her early years; was educated with her in France, in the Catholic Faith; and had left the Court to become the wife of Bruntfield. It was a time calculated to change the natures of women as well as of men. The severity with which her religion was treated in Scotland, the wrongs of her royal mistress, and finally the sufferings and death of her husband, acting upon a mind naturally enthusiastic, all conspired to alter the character of Marie Carmichael, and substitute for the rosy hues of her early years, the gloom of the sepulchre and the penitentiary. She continued, after the restoration of peace, to reside in the house of her late husband; but, though it was within two miles of the city, she did not for many years re-appear in public. With no society but that of her children, and the persons necessary to attend upon them, she mourned in secret over past events, seldom stirring from a particular apartment, which, in accordance with a fashion by no means uncommon, she had caused to be hung with black, and which was solely illuminated with a lamp. In the most rigorous observances of her faith, she was assisted by a priest, whose occasional visits formed almost the only intercourse which she maintained with the external world. One strong passion gradually acquired a complete sway over her mind—REVENGE—a passion which the practice of the age had invested with a conventional respectability, and which no kind of religious feeling, then known, was able either to check or soften. So entirely was she absorbed by this fatal passion, that her very children, at length, ceased to have interest or merit in her eyes, except in so far as they appeared likely to be the means of gratifying it. One after another, as they reached the age of fourteen, she sent them to France, in order to be educated; but the accomplishment to which they were enjoined to direct their principal attention was that of martial exercises. The eldest, Stephen, returned, at eighteen, a strong and active youth, with a mind of little polish, or literary information, but considered a perfect adept in sword-play. As his mother surveyed his noble form, a smile stole into the desert of her wan and widowed face, as a winter sunbeam wanders over a waste of snows. But it was a smile of more than mo-

therly pride: she was estimating the power which that frame would have in contending with the murderous Moubray. She was not alone pleased with the handsome figure of her first born child; but she thought with a fiercer and faster joy upon the appearance which it would make in the single combat, against the slayer of his father. Young Bruntfield, who, having been from his earliest years, trained to the purpose now contemplated by his mother, rejoiced in the prospect, now lost no time in preferring before the King a charge of murder against the laird of Barnbogle, whom he at the same time challenged, according to a custom then not altogether abrogated, to prove his innocence in single combat. The king having granted the necessary licence, the fight took place in the royal park, near the palace; and to the surprise of all assembled, young Bruntfield fell under the powerful sword of his adversary. The intelligence was communicated to his mother at Craighouse, where she was found in her darkened chamber, prostrate before an image of the virgin. The priest who had been commissioned to break the news, opened his discourse in a tone intended to prepare her for the worst; but she cut him short at the very beginning with a frantic exclamation—"I know what you would tell—the murderer's sword has prevailed—and there are now but two, instead of three to redress their father's wrongs!" The melancholy incident, after the first burst of feeling, seemed only to have concentrated and increased that passion by which she had been engrossed for so many years. She appeared to feel that the death of her eldest son only formed an addition to that debt which it was the sole object of her existence to see discharged. "Roger," she said, "will have the death of his brother as well as that of his father, to avenge. Animated by such a double object, his arm can hardly fail to be successful."

Roger returned about two years after, a still handsomer, more athletic, and more accomplished youth than his brother. Instead of being daunted by the fate of Stephen, he burned but the more eagerly to wipe out the injuries of his house with the blood of Moubray. On his application for a licence being presented to the court, it was objected by the crown lawyers that the case had been already closed by the mal fortune of the former challenger. But, while this was the subject of their deliberations, the applicant caused so much annoyance and fear in the court circle by the threats which he gave out against the enemy of his house, that the king, whose inability to procure respect either for himself or for the law is well known, thought it best to decide, in favour of his claim. Roger Bruntfield, therefore, was permitted to fight in barras with Moubray; but the same fortune attended him as that which had already deprived the widow of her first child. Slipping his foot in the midst of the combat, he reeled to the ground, embarrassed by his cumbrous armour. Moubray, according to the barbarous practice of the age, immediately sprung upon and despatched him. "Heaven's will be done!" said the widow, when she heard of the fatal incident; "but, gratias Deo, there still remains another chance."

Henry Bruntfield, the third and last surviving son, had all along been the favourite of his mother. Though apparently cast in a softer mould than his two elder brothers, and bearing all the marks of a gentler and more amiable disposition, he in reality cherished the hope of avenging his father's death more deeply in the recesses of his heart, and longed more ardently to accomplish that deed than any of his brothers. His mind naturally susceptible of the softest and tenderest impressions, had contracted the enthusiasm of his mother's wish in its strongest shape; as the fairest garments are capable of the deepest stain. The intelligence, which reached him in France, of the death of his brothers, instead of bringing to his heart the alarm and horror which might have been expected, only braced him to the adventure which he now knew to be before him. From this period he forsook the elegant learning which he had heretofore delighted to cultivate. His nights were spent in poring over the memoirs of distinguished knights,—his days were consumed in the tilt-yard of the sword-player. In due time he entered the French army, in order to add, to mere science, that practical hardihood, the want of which he conceived to be the cause of the death of his brothers. Though the sun of chivalry was now declining far in the occident, it was not yet altogether set. Montmorency was but just dead; Bayard was still alive—Bayard, the knight of all others who has merited the motto, "sans peur et sans reproche." Of the lives and actions of such men Henry Bruntfield was a devout admirer and imitator. No young knight kept a firmer seat upon his horse—none complained less of the severities of campaigning—none cherished lady's love with a fonder, purer, or more devout sensation. On first being introduced at the court of Henry III. he had signified, as a matter of course, Catherine Moubray, the disinherited niece of his father's murderer, who had

been educated in a French convent by her other relatives, and was now provided for in the household of the Queen. The connexion of this young lady with the tale of his own family; and the circumstances of her being a sufferer in common with himself by the wickedness of one detested individual, would have been enough to create a deep interest respecting her in his breast. But when, in addition to these circumstances we consider that she was beautiful, was highly accomplished, and in many other respects, qualified to engage his affections, we can scarcely be surprised that that was the result of their acquaintance. Upon one night alone did these two interesting persons think of each other. Catherine, though inspired by her friends from infancy with an entire hatred of her cruel relative, contemplated with fear and aversion, the prospect of her lover being placed against him in deadly combat; and did all in her power to dissuade him from his purpose. Love, however, was of little avail against the still more deeply rooted passion which had previously occupied his breast. Flowers thrown upon a river might have been as effectual in staying its course towards the cataract, as the gentle entreaties of Catherine Moubray in withholding Henry Bruntfield from the enterprise for which his mother had reared him—for which his brothers had died—for which he had all along moved and breathed.

To be concluded in our next.

JERUSALEM—From Carne's general description of Jerusalem, which is among the best I have seen, I extract the following passage—"It is difficult to find a place that contains so many inhabitants and dwellings within so small a compass as Jerusalem; they seem to cling with tenacity, and with some of their ancient fondness, to the very brink of the declivities on every side. Certainly, as in former times, the utmost use is made of every inch of ground; and nature has been very niggard in this respect. Ascending from the labyrinth of narrow streets, up a gentle acclivity, we found that the summit commanded a singular view of the interior of the city, amidst which appeared more ruinous and desolate spots than could previously have been imagined. Directly in front, was a large reservoir of water, supplied from the ancient cisterns, several miles distant. Steps led down the sides of this reservoir to the water, which forms now, as it did in past times, a chief resource of the surrounding inhabitants, during the dry weather, and was no doubt one of those pools so frequently alluded to in Scripture. It was thickly inclosed by dwellings on every side, and shut out from view, except from the immediate vicinity, and was evidently hewn out of the rock. The flat terraced roofs of the city, the domes and minarets of the mosques, blended with the cupolas of the churches, came into view from this ruinous eminence, where the stranger might well sit for hours and muse on the strange and various picture at his feet. There, to the east, stood the palace of Herod, amidst its gardens and palm trees, the home of the beautiful Mariamne, close to the forsaken spot where is now a mosque, and that mosque is now built on the ruins of a Christian church. To the left, on the city of the tall and strong tower built by the Crusaders, and now garrisoned by the Turks, stood the palace of the King of Israel. Each solitary place around was once trodden or dwelt in by a prince or a prophet, and alike echoed to the splendid prophecies of future glory or the warnings of unutterable woe."

ALEPPO.—The population of Aleppo, says Fuller in his interesting Tour through the Turkish empire, is considerable, and almost exclusively Mahometan; for the Esayrian idolaters reside chiefly in the villages, and not more than a hundred Christian families are now to be found at this primitive seat of their religion; all of them Greek schismatics. To one of the principal of these, a young man named Yussuff Saba, I had letters of introduction from Mossy Elias. He received me very kindly, but excused himself from lodging me in his house, which he said was in a state of great confusion. An old steward who had lived for many years in his family was going to be married; and according to the customs of these countries, where the distinction between master and servant is not so strongly marked as among nations which have made a greater progress in refinement, the marriage was to take place at his master's house; and Yussuff, in order to show his respect for his old domestic, had determined that it should be celebrated with due magnificence. The ceremony was not to take place till two days afterwards, but the visitings and feastings had already commenced, and the bustle of preparation was at its height. Yussuff, therefore, provided me with an apartment at the house of his brother-in-law, another wealthy Christian, where he thought I should be more quiet than in his own. During the greater part of the next day the rain kept me in-doors, and when evening came, I was glad to seek for amusement in a visit to the wedding party. I found a large assembly, chiefly composed of the Christian inhabitants of the town, but mixed with a few of the neighbouring Esayrian peasants. In the middle of the room was an emaciated old man with gray hair and beard, whom I soon discovered to be the family buffoon. The company seemed much amused by his odd sayings and grotesque attitudes; but the most effective part of his wit appeared to consist in the enormous quantity of aqua vite which he drank, and every draught there was a general peal of laughter. No did the other guests appear less disposed to imitate than to applaud old Simone, as a small glass was handed round every quarter of an hour, and I observed very few who ever allowed it to pass. The Christians in the north of Syria are extremely addicted to aqua vite, partly from taste, and partly because their Mahometan neighbors are confined to water only. Drinking they therefore esteem a distinctive mark of their religion, and their zeal and orthodoxy are gauged by the quantity of strong liquors which they are able to swallow. The other amusements of the evening were singing and dancing, in which several of the company took a part. The most favourite vocal performer was a young Jew from Aleppo, whose appearance was greeted with general acclamation. He had a most excellent voice, and was a great adept in the art of singing after the Eastern fashion. The