

## Literature, &amp;c.

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From Chambers's Miscellany.

## BRUNTFIELD.

A SCOTTISH TRADITIONAL STORY.

AMONG the many family quarrels which arose out of the civil contentions in Scotland during the reign of Queen Mary, there was one of a melancholy and remarkable nature which sprung up between Stephen Bruntfield of Craighouse, and Robert Moubray of Barnbogle. Bruntfield was an adherent of the Queen; Moubray attached himself to the more prosperous cause of the Regent Murray, who rewarded him with the gift of his deceased elder brother's estate, to the exclusion of his niece, Catherine Moubray. The cause of Moubray's enmity to Bruntfield is uncertain; it is only known that, having succeeded [December 1596] in taking Craighouse for the Regent, after a siege of two months, he barbarously slew its unfortunate proprietor while conducting him, under a promise of protection, to Edinburgh. The scene of this bloody deed is still pointed out at the upper part of a common in the southern environs of the city, called, from the circumstance, *Bruntfield Links*.

Bruntfield left a widow and three infant sons. His widow, the lady of Craighouse, had been an intimate of Queen Mary from her early years; was educated with her in France in the Catholic faith; and left her court to become the wife of Bruntfield. It was a time calculated to change the nature 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 murder 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 reappear 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 by 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 acquired a complete sway over the mind of the lady of Craighouse—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 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 at 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 motherly 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 as she thought 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 [James VI.] 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 license, 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 of this sad event 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 commencement 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 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 license being presented to the court, it was objected by the Crown lawyers that the case had been already closed by *mal fortune* of the former challenger. But while this was the subject of their deliberation, 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 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 practice of the age, immediately sprang upon and despatched him. 'Heaven's will be done!' said the widow, when she heard of the fatal incident; 'but, thank God! 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, it was not altogether set—Montmorency was but lately 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 veneration. On first being introduced into the court of Henry III., he had signalled, as a matter of course, Catharine Moubray, the disinherited niece of his father's murderer, who had been educated in a French convent by her own 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 circumstance of her being a sufferer in common with himself by the wickedness of one 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 point alone did these two interesting persons ever think differently. Catharine, 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 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 Catharine 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.

At length, accomplished with all the skill which could then be acquired in arms, glowing with all the earnest feelings of youth, Henry returned to Scotland. On reaching his mother's dwelling, she clasped him, in a transport of varied feelings, to her breast, and for a long time could only gaze upon his elegant person. 'My last and dearest,' she at length said; 'and thou too art to be adventured upon this perilous course! Much have I bethought me of the purpose which now remains to be accomplished. I have not been without a sense of dread lest I be only doing that which is to sink my soul in flames at the day of reckoning; but yet there has been that which comforts me also. Only yesternight I dreamed that your father appeared before me. In his hand he held three goodly shafts—at a distance appeared the fierce and sanguinary Moubray. He desired me to shoot the arrows at that arch traitor, and I gladly obeyed. A first and a second he caught in his hand, broke, and trampled on with contempt. But the third shaft, which was the fairest and goodliest of all, pierced his guilty bosom, and he immediately expired. The reverend shade at this gave me an encouraging smile, and withdrew. My Henry, thou art that *third arrow* which is at length to avail against the shedder of our blood. The dream seems a revela-

tion, given especially that I may have comfort in this enterprise, otherwise so revolting to a mother's feelings.

Young Bruntfield saw that his mother's wishes had only imposed upon her reason, but he made no attempt to break the charm by which she was actuated, being glad, upon any terms, to obtain her sanction for that adventure to which he was himself impelled by feelings considerably different. He therefore began, in the most deliberate manner, to take measures for bringing on the combat with Moubray. The same legal objections which had stood against the second duel were maintained against the third; but public feeling was too favourable to the object to be easily withstood. The laird of Barnbogle, though somewhat past the bloom of life, was still a powerful and active man, and, instead of expressing any fear to meet this third and more redoubtable warrior, rather longed for a combat which promised, if successful, to make him one of the most renowned swordsmen of his time. He had also heard of the attachment which subsisted between Bruntfield and his niece; and, in the contemplation of an alliance which might give some force to the claims of that lady upon his estate, found a deeper and more selfish reason for accepting the challenge of his youthful enemy. King James himself protested against stretching the law as to duelling so far; but, sensible that there would be no peace between either the parties or their adherents till it should be decided in a fair combat, he was fain to grant the required license.

The fight was appointed to take place on Cramond Inch, a low grassy island in the Firth of Forth, opposite the castle of Barnbogle. All the preparations were made in the most approved manner by the young Duke of Lennox, who had been the friend of Bruntfield in France. On a level spot, close to the northern beach of the islet, a space was marked off, and strongly secured by a paling. The spectators, who were almost exclusively gentlemen, sat upon a rising ground beside the enclosure, while the space towards the sea was quite clear. At one end, surrounded by his friends, stood the laird of Barnbogle, a huge and ungainly figure, whose features displayed a mixture of ferocity and hypocrisy in the highest degree unpleasing. At the other, also attended by a host of family allies and friends, stood the gallant Henry Bruntfield, who, if divested of his armour, might have realized the idea of a winged Mercury. A seat was erected close beside the *barras* for the Duke of Lennox and other courtiers, who were to act as judges; and at a little distance upon the sea lay a small decked vessel, with a single female figure on board. After all the proper ceremonies which attended this strange legal custom had been gone through, the combatants advanced into the centre, and, planting foot to foot, each with his heavy sword in his hand, awaited the command which should let them loose against each other, in a combat which both knew would only be closed with the death of one or the other.

The word being given, the fight commenced. Moubray, almost at the first pass, gave his adversary a cut in the right limb, from which the blood was seen to flow profusely. But Bruntfield was enabled, by this mishap, to perceive the trick upon which his antagonist chiefly depended, and by taking care to avoid it, put Moubray to his mettle. The fight then proceeded for a few minutes without either gaining the least advantage over the other. Moubray was able to defend himself pretty successfully from the cuts and thrusts of his antagonist, but he could make no impression in return. The question then became one of time. It was evident that, if no lucky stroke should take effect before hand, he who first became fatigued with the exertion would be the victim. Moubray felt his disadvantage as the elder and bulkier man, and began to fight most desperately and with less caution. One tremendous blow, for which he seemed to have gathered his last strength, took effect upon Bruntfield, and brought him upon his knee in a half-stupid state; but the elder combatant had no strength to follow up the effort. He reeled towards his youthful and sinking enemy, and stood for a few moments over him vainly endeavouring to raise his weapon for another and final blow. Ere he could accomplish his wish, Bruntfield recovered sufficient strength to draw his dagger, and stab beneath the breastplate his exhausted foe.

The murderer of his race instantly lay dead beside him, and a shout of joy from the spectators hailed him as the victor. At the same instant a scream of more than earthly note arose from the vessel anchored near the island; a lady descended from its side into a boat, and rowing to the land, rushed up to the bloody scene, where she fell upon the neck of the conqueror, and pressed him with the most frantic eagerness to her bosom. The widow of Stephen Bruntfield at length found the yearnings of twenty years fulfilled—she saw the murderer of her husband, the slayer of two sons, dead on the sward before her, while there still survived to her as noble a child as ever blest a mother's arms. But the revulsion of feeling produced by the event was too much for her strength; or rather Providence, in its righteous judgment, had resolved that so unwholy a sentiment, as that of revenge should not be too signally gratified. Overcome by her feelings, she almost immediately expired in the arms of her son.

The remainder of the tale of Bruntfield may be easily told. After a decent interval, the young laird of Craighouse married Catharine Moubray; and as the king saw it right to restore that young lady to a property originally forfeited for service to his mother, the happiness of the parties might be considered as complete. A long life of prosperity and peace was granted

to them; and at their death they had the satisfaction of enjoying that greatest of all earthly blessings, the love and respect of a numerous and virtuous family.

From Hogg's Weekly Instructor.

## LIVE NOT TO YOURSELF.

BY THE REV. JOHN TODD.

ON a frail little stem in the garden hangs the opening rose. Go ask it why it hangs there? 'I hang here,' says the beautiful flower, 'to sweeten the air which man breathes, to open my beauties to kindle emotion in his eye, to show him the hand of his God who pencilled every leaf, and laid them thus on my bosom. And whether you find me here to greet him every morning, or whether you find me on the lone mountain side, with the bare possibility that he will throw me one passing glance, my end is the same. I live not to myself.'

Beside you highway stands an aged tree, solitary and alone. You see no living thing near it, and you say surely *that* must stand for itself alone. 'No,' says the tree, 'God never made me for a purpose so small. For more than a hundred years I have stood here. In summer I have spread out my arms and sheltered the panting flocks which hastened to my shade. In my bosom I have concealed and protected the brood of young birds, as they lay and rocked in their nests; in the storm I have more than once received in my body the lightning's bolt, which had else destroyed the traveller; the acorns I have matured from year to year, have been carried far and near, and groves of forest oak can claim me as their parent. I have lived for the eagle which has perched on my top; for the humming bird, that has paused and refreshed its giddy wing ere it danced away again like a blossom of the air; for the insect has formed a home within the folds of my bark—and when I can stand no longer, I shall fall by the hand of man, and I will go to strengthen the ship which makes him lord of the ocean, and to his dwelling, to warm his hearth and cheer his home. I live not to myself.'

On yonder mountain-side comes down the silver brook, in the distance resembling a ribbon of silver, running and leaping as it dashes joyously and fearlessly down. Go ask the leaper what it is doing. 'I was born,' says the brook, 'high up the mountain; but there I could do no good; and so I am hurrying down, running where I can, and leaping where I must, but hastening down to water the sweet valley, where the thirsty cattle may drink, where the lark may sing on my margin, where I may drive the mill for the accommodation of man, and then widen into the great river, and bear up his steam-boats and shipping, and finally plunge into the ocean, to rise again in vapour, and perhaps come back again, in the clouds, to my own native mountain, and live my short life over again. Not a drop of water comes down my channel in whose bright face you may not read, 'None of us liveth to himself.'

Speak now to that solitary star that hangs in the far verge of heaven, and ask the bright sparkler what it is doing there? Its voice comes down the path of light, and cries—'I am a mighty world. I was stationed here at the creation. I was among the morning stars that sang together, and among the sons of God that shouted for joy, at the creation of the earth. Ay, I was there—

'When the radiant morn of creation broke,  
And the world in the smile of God awoke,  
And the empty realms of darkness and death  
Were moved through their depths by his mighty  
breath,

And the orbs of beauty and spheres of flame  
From the void abyss by myriads came,  
In the joy of youth, as they darted away  
Through the widening wastes of space to  
play,

Their silver voices in chorns rung,  
And this was the song the bright ones sung.'

Here, among the morning stars, I held my place, and help to keep other worlds balanced and in their places. I have oceans and mountains, and I support myriads of immortal beings on my bosom; and when I have done this I send my bright beams down to earth, and the sailor takes hold of the helm, and fixes his eye on me, and finds his home across the ocean. Of all the countless hosts of my sister stars, who walk forth in the great space of creation, not one, not one lives or shines for herself.

And thus God has written upon the flower that sweetens the air, upon the breeze that rocks that flower on its stem, upon the rain-drops which swell the mighty river, upon the dew-drop that refreshes the smallest sprig of moss that roars its head in the desert, upon the ocean that rocks every swimmer in its chambers, upon every pencilled shell that sleeps in the caverns of the deep, as well as upon the mighty sun, which warms and cheers the millions of creatures that live in its light—upon *all* hath He written, 'None of us liveth to himself.'

And if you will read this lesson in characters still more distinct and striking, you will go to the garden of Gethsemane, and here the Redeemer in prayer, while the angel of God strengthens him. You will read it on the hill of Calvary where a voice, that might be the concentrated voice of the whole universe of God, proclaims that the highest noblest deed which the Infinite can do, is to do good to others—to live not to himself!

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## PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

THE ATMOSPHERE.

THE word Geography, in its literal and most extensive sense, signifies a description of the earth. The science which it is employed to