

THE
LAIRD OF ARDENOAIGE

AND THE

GHOST

OF

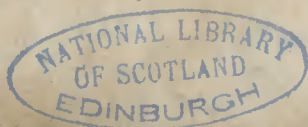
FENHAGLEN.

CRIEFF:

PRINTED BY T. M'DONALD.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

Duncan McDermid



THE

LAND OF ANDRÉNOIS

18

OF THE

REPUBLIC

CHIEF

OF THE

STATE

THE
LAIRD OF ARDENOAICE
AND THE
GHOST OF FENHAGLEN.

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear ;
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

GRAYS ELEGY.

COLIN CAMPBELL was born in Ardencaige about the middle of the fifteenth century, he was son and heir to Duncan Campbell, laird of Ardenoaigne. As to his attainments in classical knowledge, we have no particular account ; but it is probable it was but limited, as science had made but small progress, especially in the remote parts of the country, in that dark age. However, we are told he was without a rival in all athletic exercises. It is said of him, that, in fencing, he could spring at one bound the length of eighteen feet on his antagonist, and could use the broad-sword, in either hand, with equal dexterity. To be expert in sword exercises was the grand point at which Scotia's sons aimed in these days ; consequently there was nothing wanting to promote his proficiency in that. But he did not confine himself to this alone, for he was an expert huntsman, which he made his chief employment, or rather amusement. At the chase of the roe or the deer, he always

brought off the prize. In short, he held claim to that honour and bravery that always characterized his name. Though his station in life was above the most that came in his way, yet he put himself on a level with every person that came in his company. In short, he was familiar with all his father's tenants, and joined them in every domestic amusement which was common with them. Where Colin was, there was sure to be a number of the most expert of his companions employed in some harmless sport or game. In the long and dreary winter nights, he commonly resorted with his companions to the house of one Peter Fisher in Craggan, whom they commonly called, *Par nan sgeule*. He was an antiquated old man, and much noted for his great memory in relating old stories, which happened centuries back, handed down to him by his forefathers. He told of the many battles fought in the days of Wallace and Bruce, and of the bloody contests that fell out among the Clans, many of which were fought in his own day, which inspired the mind of the young hero, who listened with attention. He also would expound to them the cause and reason of the names of hills and dales, streams and fountains, likewise the death or event that happened where a heaped cairn was placed, and the duty of every one that passed, or went to see them, was to place an additional stone on them, which custom was long upheld in the country. Many a wonderful story of fairies, and dreadful stories of Ghosts Peter would tell them. In a word, the whole of Ardenoage history dwelt in him. He would have himself placed on a seat made of turf in the peat muck, with his hearers in a circle round the fire. He kept on a good fire, in which the laird always rendered him assistance by allowing him to make plenty of peats. And as Colin was the only child his parents was blest with; therefore they withheld nothing from him that might augment his happiness and welfare in his native rural vale.

“But pleasures are like poppis spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed,

Or like the snow falls in the river,
 A moment white—then melts for ever ;
 Or like the borialis race
 That flit ere you can point their place,
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm."—*Burns.*

While Colin was swimming amidst these domestic enjoyments, unconscious of adversity, death deprived him of an indulgent and loving mother ; which had a great effect on his wonted agreeableness, and his father shortly after married a woman of a proud and haughty disposition, which still more rendered his state disagreeable both to himself and others. She soon had a large family to her husband, (the laird) which caused her to have a natural disregard for Colin, which he could not altogether conceal. This caused his father to do more to promote his welfare, and the more so on account of his mother, whom he had loved with fondness. This only tended to increase his wife's hatred to Colin. She foresaw also that he would become sole heir of the estate at the demise of his father, as he was his legitimate son and heir, and she predicted that then, both she and her family would be abandoned, and abased by him, and put to open shame, and perhaps to death. Consequently she formed the barbarous design in her own breast, that she would be enabled at one time or other to effect some plan to take away his life. But how to put her atrocious design into execution, became a matter difficult and dangerous both to herself and family, as she knew his father and every other person that knew him, was most affectionately attached to him ; yet she still made him the object of her hatred and cruel design, and remained in the expectation that she would be the means of putting death in his way some way or other. About this time a Ghost appeared in Fenbaglen (a lonely glen running between Ardenoage, and the head of Glenlednick (which spread terror through Ardenoage, and surrounding neighbourhoods. It was generally believed, when such appeared, or was seen, that it was the spirit of some de-

parted person, doomed to such a state for some secret crime committed while on earth. To this mysterious appearance became the object of much conjecture among the people of Ardnoaige, except the wiser sort who remained in silent amazement, knowing it to be the doing of the all-wise for some unhuman cause. It had its abode in the very centre of the glen, in the most lonely part of it. It appeared that it could not extend its rapacious designs beyond a limited space of the glen; but sad were the effects of its outrages there. Man and beast alike became the victims of this unearthly destroyer. It was quite evident that it had no power while it was day, nor until the sun went down; consequently the benighted traveller was sure to become a prey, to the fury of this spirit. The laird of Ardnoaige had a person whom he employed for carrying parcels to and from the south, commonly called the post, he was benighted coming through Fenhaglen, and was met by the Ghost, and torn to pieces. Part of him was found in a linn in the burn of Fenhaglen. The linn is called the post's linn to this day. The tenants of Ardnoaige had huts built in Fenhaglen, which they called the sheahngs, to which they all resorted with their cattle and sheep in the warm months of summer. They were obliged to withdraw from this pleasant habitation with their flocks on account of the ravagings of the fiend. Some of these huts or houses were thrown down; stones were tumbled out of their places; heather, bushes, and earth, torn up and scattered abroad, these, and many more, were the depredations committed by the Ghost of Fenhaglen. There is a deep rocky den on the side of the glen, which it was supposed, was the centre of its abode. Horrible were the moanings and roarings, that were heard by the inhabitants of Ardnoaige on the calm gloamings, when they met together after the toils of the day; or that were carried to their ears by the stormy wind that roll'd through the glen. About this time the laird was called from the bosom of his family and from his domestic enjoyments, in consequence of the disturbance in which Scotland was in-

volved, on account of the minority of James the third. His wife was anxious that Colin would accompany his father, thinking in herself that, happily, he might fall in the field of battle. But his father absolutely refused to take him away, on account of his parental affections towards him. However, the absence of his father, appeared to her a fit opportunity for putting her inhuman design against him into execution. And among the many plans she had formed in her mind, the Ghost of Fenhaglen appeared to her the most likely to put an end to his life. If she could invent some scheme, to put him that way. She at length disclosed her mind to some of her more intimate and trust-worthy friends, and they agreed, that she should invite them and all that she could trust, to a dinner, and also to have the young laird present, that they might have an opportunity of imposing upon him. Accordingly, splendid preparations were made, and they all met on the day appointed. In the course of conversation they turned on the Ghost of Fenhaglen, remarking the honour and praise that would be due to the man, that would put a stop to the formidable proceedings of the Ghost, and one of the boldest began to reproach the laird for his unmanly conduct, in allowing the Ghost to do so much harm without endeavouring to stop its progress. He that was become the theme of the whole country for his bravery and accomplishments! but he feared that his fame would come to nought, for now he was believed to be an indolent person, that direful were the effects of that infernal spirit, and in short if he would not go and dispatch it, he would soon become the most despised person in the country. Sensible of his mother's, and the whole company's disposition towards him, he left the room without giving them much satisfaction, and retired to his own room, to meditate on the subject at his own leisure, as he never thought a Ghost could be conquered by the strength of man, he was therefore thunder-struck with what he heard, and as his noble mind could ill put up with such insulting reproofs, and being unaccustomed to such reproachful language, his mind did arouse, inso-

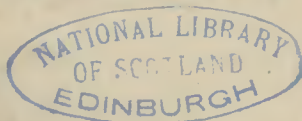
much that he was determined, whatever would be the result, to wage war with the Ghost. Yet there were many objections that arose in his mind. He thought it impossible to conquer a being, that it could put itself into any form or shape, and that could blast him to death in a moment, or tear him in pieces, in an instant, and that he would die an ignominious death, and that his name would be lost for ever in dishonour, and disgrace, and though it would give satisfaction to his few vicious enemies, yet he would be lost for ever to the many that were his friends, and more especially to her that had his form imprinted on his heart. Yet on the other hand, he would rather suffer death in any shape, than lose the honour to which he had aspired, and to become that indocible person, told him by his insidious friends; but if happily he would come off the victor, he would be more dreaded than envied by his enemies, or rather by her his enemy. Accordingly, next morning as the sun was shading its bright beams through the calm vale of Ardenoage o'er the green lofty mountains of Almond, when Colin left his father's hall, with his sword belted on his side, and his dog, Shulach, (a large grey hound that always accompanied him in his hunting excursions) he deemed it prudent before proceeding, to let *Par nan sgeule*, know of his intended exploit. Accordingly, he went to his house, (the laird knew he was well versed in the knowledge of Ghosts) and told him of his design. Peter after a short pause, said, "Colin my man, if you were going to raise that weapon in a combat with man, though it were one of the bravest of our forefathers, Fingal's heros, I would have hopes of your success; but to fight the Ghost of Fenhaglen must be a different thing. You are strong Colin, but if you go, you must not go in your own strength; you must go in the strength of that Almighty power who can strengthen your arm, and whet your sword against the most infernal power. He that confined that Ghost to that lonely abode where it is, and in his mercies withheld it from extending its ravages farther, here among us, must be the same that can draw it from us, when He fulfilled his purposes here

with it. And it is likely you may be the one that will be instrumental in subduing it, and bringing to light the cause of its appearance; for we have heard of many a Ghost sent to rest by man. But as I said before, you must not go in your own strength. It may come in the shape of some fierce animal, and crush you to death in a moment. But take your sword, and mark out a compass right round about you, and stand right in the centre, with your confidence placed in the Almighty's protection, so you can stand in that position, against whatever form it may appear unto you, until such time as it will transform itself into the form of a person like yourself; then you can converse with it, and know the reason of its appearance, and use your best means to send it to its rest. Now you must be aware, that you are going as if you were to descend down the face of a steep rock, by means of a rope, and it is that mighty preserver that is to hold the rope; and if you will still trust him, he will guide you safe to the bottom, but if you fail in the confidence, He will let you go, and you will be dashed to pieces. This is your situation, go then, and may He that guides our sun by day, and our moon by night go with you, but you must take some person with you, and you will leave them with your dog at a distance, and instruct him to let your dog go if you are like to be overpowered by the Ghost; for I have heard old men say, that a grey hound was a good guard, if one was going the way of Ghosts; and if I were as swift as I was that day your father was born, when I went to St. Johnston and back in one day, I would not be the last to follow you up the glen. You will take Donald Ban, your own man with you, as he is a fit person." Accordingly Colin went to Donald—known by the name of "Domuhull Ban Achleibh,"* he lived in the uppermost house in Ardenoige, called the Tomodhar, when Colin came to the house, Donald told him there was a deer that went west along the side

* Because he carried the Laird's luggage with him from place to place.

of the hill, and they would go and follow, but the laird told him that he was to direct his chase another course. You will go and put yourself ready, for I intend (he did not deem it proper, to let Donald know of his intended act) to go over to Glenlednick, to behold the beauty of their far famed maids. They are bright as the dew that falls on that flowery green, and pure as that stream that wimples down the hill. Their beauty and simplicity have endeared them to thousands. Accordingly the laird and Donald set out, and as they were ascending the hill above Ardenoaigne to the mouth of the glen, the young laird beheld the Angel of his soul walking on the shores of Lawers, viewing the ever busy wave, sporting with the sandy shore, and longing to see Colin's boat dancing on the billows towards her, (she was daughter to the laird of Lawers, an ancient family of the name of Campbell, and she was no less eminent for her beauty, than Colin was for his bravery) and as he was gazing on the treasure of his heart, Donald who had the Ghost in his mind, and was anxious that they would go on, to be through the glen ere the sun would set, and as they were about to lose sight of Ardenoaigne, there was a silent thought that passed over his soul that it was the last, the last, to her whose eye followed him wistfully as they went forward, the sun was gone down o'er Benlawers, and sable night was begun to shade its grey mantle o'er the sides of Fenhaglen as they went along. Donald who began to fear what was the design of the laird, absolutely refused to go forward any farther, but the laird drew his sword, and told him the whole of his design, and before he would let him go, he would pierce his sword to his heart. So when Donald heard this, he was silent, and on they went, till near the place of their destination, there he left Donald with the charge of his dog, Shulach, and charged him, for his life, not to go back, but stand on that spot. He also gave him instructions when to let go his dog. The laird then went onward to a green plain where he took up his position, and put himself in readiness to meet his antagonist, when he heard a doleful lamentation rising out

of the deep den, and still approaching nearer to him, till at length it appeared right before him, in the form of a large black animal, roaring and tearing the ground as it came. Colin having fixed Peter's counsels in his heart, stood fast in his compass, while the Ghost went round foaming with rage, and tearing the ground as it went, but could not approach the laird. And when it was exhausted with rage, it stood still, when the laird conjured it to appear in the form of man. In a moment it appeared in the likeness of man—a man he knew that had died sometime before, one Donald Macpherson. As the laird knew it was to be either death or victory, he sprung out of his compass, and in the vigour of his strength took a death hold of the Ghost; but his strength began to fail under the inexpugnable fury of the Ghost, and was half brought to the ground, when he cried for this dog, (whom Donald kept at a distance, solicitous about the fate of his master, knowing his life was bound in his) when the Ghost saw the dog, he descried the laird to keep it off, and he would let him go. But the laird refused, except he would go and rest in peace in his grave. But it told him his body was lying in his grave, only his spirit was there. Go then to the regions of spirits, and return no more. Let me go, and dwell on the raging sea. Go to thy place, or my dog shall be upon you, replied the laird. Hold your dog, and here my voice. It drew back from the laird, and after a short pause, said in a low voice, "I murdered a man near this spot, a short time before my death. His body with my spade, with which I slew him, lyes buried at the rock of that green knowe, his blood is on the spade, I could not wash it off, his innocent blood went hence with my soul, and I was doomed to return to molest the earth till my known guilt would be known to man. Go then, and take his body and bury him with his father's, and make my crime known to man, and I will trouble man no more." At which it vanished out of sight. Colin went and actually found the body and the spade in the very spot told by the Ghost. He then went and told his sad tale to the men of Ardenoage,



and they came and knew the body, to be the body of one Duncan M'Nab, tenant, Succoth. Till then no man knew how he met with his death. There was prior to that time a thief that lived in a cave on the top of Craig ucaig, a high rock, standing on the confines of Glenlednick and Fenhaglen. He lived on the best and fattest of their sheep in both countries, to their great vexation, without knowing who was their depredator. One snowy morning as Duncan M'Nab went out to see if his sheep was safe in the fold, he saw the entrails of one of his best widders on the ground, and a man's track on the snow. Distracted with rage he took his sword in his hand, and followed the track on to the top of the rock. In he went, unconscious of fear; but when he saw the terrible appearance of the thief his strength and courage passed from him as a dream, and the thief had him down when he asked mercy, and the thief asked him how he came there? He told him he missed his way passing the hill, and came in on the track. The thief then gave him meat, then drew his sword and made him swear by his God, not to mention what he saw to any man, or he would dispatch him in a moment; and never to be so rash as to come to seek the place again; for his life was as little in his sight, when he came in, as the life of a cock—after he swore, he got off. Duncan was a righteous sort of a man, and never told any person, till the thief was long out of the place. Donald Macpherson met with great loss by the thief; and he found fault with Duncan for not letting him know in time that the thief was there. This was known to be the cause of the dispute between Donald Macpherson and Duncan M'Nab, while building a hut in Fenhaglen. The fame of the laird went far, and he was feared and respected by all, even by his mother, who had no power nor spirit to plot more against him;

FINIS.