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Title: The Hubble-Shue

Author: Christian Carstairs

Release Date: January 22, 2011 [EBook #35039]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE HUBBLE-SHUE ***

THE HUBBLE-SHUE.

BY

MISS CARSTAIRS.

Harry, harry, hobillischowe!
Se quha is cummyn nowe.

THE CRYING OF ANE PLAYE.

[THIRTY COPIES PRINTED.]

EDINBURGH:

Printed by ANDREW SHORTREDE, Thistle Lane.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

If originality be a test of genius, the authoress of the *Hubble-Shue* bids fair to rank highest amongst the dramatic writers of the last century. This rare merit even the most fastidious critic must allow: but her histrionic essay is, in another respect, equally remarkable. We are told that obscurity is one of the sources of the sublime; and who will presume to deny that this drama is not sufficiently obscure? Perhaps the most remarkable feature in it is that singular, partially intelligible mystification, which we in vain look for in other writers: thus, when Gustard enters with his sword drawn, is it possible to figure any thing more intelligible and natural than that the cat should run in beneath the bed? But, on the other hand, who was Gustard?—why was his sword drawn?—what did he want?—how came the cat there? are questions, the solution of which is not easy. Then we have the interesting Lady Gundie, who flits across the stage without saying a word, like one of the phantom kings in *Macbeth*, leaving the beholder in a state of the most feverish excitement. In short, so much is left to the imagination, that the mind gets quite bewildered, and we regard with most profound veneration a drama capable of producing such extraordinary sensations.

Perhaps there is not in the forcible vernacular of our country, a more touching description than the interesting child's graphic account of the horrid crocodile devouring a yellow Indian for his luncheon, with as much relish, and as little remorse, as the pitiless black men

seized upon the blessed missionary, and "eat him all up." [1] Hard must that heart be, which cannot feel for the situation of the hapless daughter—who but a Cannibal or a Whig would refuse a tear of sympathy?—and who does not fondly hope that the charming little story teller will be relieved by the "little senna," and "the puke" which the tender apothecary, in the fulness of his heart, prescribes for her? Touches such as these mark the poet. Were we, however, to dwell upon all the beauties, our pages would swell into a large folio; but we must restrain our inclinations, as we intend gratifying our readers with a few extracts from the poetical lucubrations of the amiable writer, of whose personal history, we regret to say, little is known.

Her name, it is understood, was Carstairs. She was by occupation a governess, and was nearly related to the Bruce Carstairs, a family of great respectability in Fifeshire.

In the year 1786, there was published "Original Poems, by a Lady, dedicated to Miss Ann Henderson. A tribute to gratitude and friendship." Edinburgh, 4to. To the copy presently before the editor, the following note is attached: "These poems, neatly stitched in marbled paper, price 6sh. Commissions to be sent to Mr Andrew Steel, [2] writer, Adam's Court; Mr F. Fraser, writer, James's Court; and Mrs Robertson, foot of New Street." Besides the internal evidence, sufficient in itself to fix the authorship upon Miss Carstairs, she has herself removed all dubiety by mentioning upon the first number, that this poetical banquet has been prepared "by the author of the Hubble-Shue."

Where there is such a variety of sweets, selection is difficult, but we will do our best. There is one charming little song entitled "The Basket of Flowers," in which the sentiment and versification are alike admirable. There is a touching simplicity about it, with which the reader will doubtlessly be enraptured:—

Profusely gay, they catch the eye,
This one I chuse and most admire.
 &c.

Such as the rose may MARY be,
When youth is fled. She's good to me.
 &c.

Stranger I came without a name,
All these fine flowers she brought to me.
 &c.

Softly, my lyre—that silken string,
Tuned to a gift so sweet to sing.
 &c.

The blushing rose, and jessamine,
Sweet is that air—sweet lyre again.
 &c.

Than blushing rose or jessamine,
Dearer to me in friendship's name.
 &c.

Softly, my lyre, that trembling string,
Friendship so new, a fleeting thing!
 &c.

No, strike! nor tremble, tremble so,
Friendship and virtue thou art one.
 Friendship and virtue, &c.

The lamentable fate of the hapless Mary has been made the subject of a series of fragments, from which it would be unpardonable not to give a specimen. Can there be any thing more affecting than the following?

—Had she, as thou! Lucretia—durst—
But here the soul! superior by her faith,
Triumph'd—and for her country and her son,
Endured, in misery, all her cruel fate,
Accursed marriage!—deep laid Malice. O MARY!
Their vill'nous designs—were here accomplish'd,—
And stabb'd thy fame! But time shall bring to light
Their darkest deeds—and heal thy wounded name.
—Avaunt thou!—Murray, Morton, Bothwell,

And thou Elizabeth, great as a Queen,
 But deadly in thy hate—as desperate by thy love.
 Mary and Essex, victims of thy ire,
 Bright stars that fell by thy malignant breath,
 Yet, yet I weep for thee—thy woman's weakness,
 And thy jealous mind,—
 O they were punishment enough—forgive,
 Forgive, O mighty God! forgive.

Many have written on this subject, but certainly none more effectively than Miss Carstairs, although passages do occur in the magnificent historical poem of Mary Queen of Scots, by Margaretta Wedderburn, [3] which may admit of a comparison. We may instance that in which the unfortunate Mary is made to say,

In history, my foul catastrophe
 Is told by Dr Robertson, and others,
 In colours lively, delicate, and just.

As every one must be familiar with a poem, which will be read when Shakespeare and Byron are not, a simple reference only is necessary. One of the first poets of the age has more recently enriched the pages of the New Scots Magazine with verses on the same subject, yet we must confess, in our humble estimation, that the Carstairs remains inviolate—*virgo intacta*. That our readers, however, may judge for themselves, we subjoin a stanza or two.

I dwell upon a mournful theme; however dark it be,
 It is no vague, no empty dream, that visions such to me:
 Were all my numbers flowing rills, all glittering stars my dots,
 Yet could I never sing the ills of—Mary Queen of Scots!

Oh! she was bright and beautiful—her charms her birth enhance;
 Descended from a hundred kings—the Dowager of France.
 Yet she was born in grief, to bear the trials Heaven allots—
 To which, "alas! all flesh is heir"—e'en Mary Queen of Scots!

Yes, she was bright and beautiful—unfortunate and fair;
 The captive of a tyrant Queen, the victim of despair;
 What youthful heart from folly's free? what star hath not its spots?
 The virtues veil the faults we see in Mary Queen of Scots.

Away! away!—the breezes swell—the surging waters foam!
 "Farewell! beloved France; farewell, my country, and my home!
 "I'll never, never see thee more, tho' dear to all my thots:" [4]
 Thus sobb'd, as sunk the fading shore, poor Mary Queen of Scots. [5]

We cannot pass over the little gem entitled

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Oh! could my sweet plaint lull to rest,
 Soften one sigh—as thou dream'st,
 I'd sit the whole night on thy tree,
 And sing, — — sing, — —
 With the thorn at my breast.

We omit innumerable beauties to insert this sweet song to the tune of "Here awa', there awa'."

Farewell my Betty, and farewell my Annie,
 And farewell my Ammie, and farewell my friends.
 &c.

Farewell to these plains and to innocent freedom,
 Believe me, my heart was akin to these scenes.
 &c.

In each cheerful moment I meant you a pleasure,

And ne'er gave offence, but it gave me more pain.
&c.

Through the lang muir I'll think of my Willie,
And through the lang muir I'll think o' him again.
Through the lang muir I'll think o' my Willie,
And through the lang muir I'll think o't again.

While the foregoing exquisite lines still ring upon the ears of the reader, the merit of the ensuing stanzas cannot be fully appreciated.

VERSES UPON A MUFF.

Altho' it may be black,
Altho' it may be grey,
Altho' it may be brown,
'Tis all the same to me.

For while it keeps my fingers warm,
I care not for its colour,
But I wish it as large as a sugar barrel,
And as soft as a down pillow.

It is delightful to mark the strong *amor patriæ* displayed in the following lines addressed to a young lady who was going to India:

Shall we once more then meet on Albion's coast,
Before, my dear, in India you're a toast?
There gilded pleasures wait your jet-black eyes,
And Asian youths for Scots Maria dies.
Yes! they may die—and die—and die again,
But ye's return, and wed a Scottish swain—
Or wed him there.

We shall conclude our extracts with the following magnificent effusion, the exact meaning of which kindred minds only can understand.

Sept. 13, 1786.

—————In a triumphal car,
Round the Town-house of Berwick,
The Genius of Tweed
Drove the Genius of Scotland,
From Berwick to town, on a mouthful of porter
She begg'd at a door of a generous ostler.

The Editor has now completed this arduous undertaking, in which his sole object has been to rescue from oblivion these remarkable relics; and although so many years have been sacrificed without the prospect of a corresponding return for the laborious exertion bestowed—severer than was at first anticipated—he has steadfastly brought the work to a conclusion under circumstances of considerable difficulty and discouragement. In conclusion, he has only to observe, that it has all along been his anxious study to furnish, in a scrupulously faithful and accurate manner, an exact copy of the text, without using even the slightest liberty with the masculine phraseology of the original.

December, 1833.

THE
HUBBLE-SHUE.

DEDICATED
TO THE

THE
HUBBLE-SHUE.

N.

'Tis false—'tis a mistake—there's not one word of truth in it.

M.

Never was a man so astonished—if he had been shot out of the mouth of a cannon, he could not have been more confounded.

Enter LADY GUNDIE.

Good God!—there is not one great name in the whole town that is not in her list.

No wonder than he was in a passion.
She flew at him like a tiger.

N.

No, no—he was in no passion.
For God's sake let us hear some of her poems.

M.

Her poems!—some of them are pretty enough, to be sure—and feeling—as one might say—*(takes a great snuff)*—But, for the dramatic piece, certainly never was any thing so ridiculous.

N.

Her dramatic!—the thing she calls the *Scundum* is ten times better than the dramatic.

M.

Dare you, sir!—that's altogether an imposition—that verse was written by her sister.

Enter GUSTARD *with a drawn sword, and the Cat runs in beneath the bed.*

SCENE II.

A door opens, and discovers a long table, with twenty covers—a fine sideboard, with a display of silver-plate, china, glasses, &c. The company ushered in by a fine powdered footman,—The SCRIVENER and his WIFE—their three DAUGHTERS—a FAT MINISTER and his DAUGHTER—other two young LADIES—MRS UMPHREY, a widow—a WEST INDIAN STUDENT—three LIEUTENANTS—an IRISHMAN—an old ENSIGN, and a COLONEL.

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE.

Do you choose a little soup, ma'am?

MRS —

I am terribly fatigued—I would rather have a pâté.

FAT MINISTER.

Hobbernob, Miss—Colonel, I fancy our bonny lasses at home are little short of the three *tits*—you took at the battle of *Malplackuy*.

COLONEL.

I can remember yet how they blush'd, when they were set up amongst us youngsters.

FAT MINISTER.

They would be educate in a nunnery.

COLONEL.

She had the most enchanting voice—the one with the dark hair.

ENSIGN.

It was the sweetest evening.

MRS UMPHREY.

Give me the pepper.

IRISHMAN.

Zoms—Miss—take care of your feathers—has the scoundrel spilt the gravy down your back?

ENSIGN.

Colonel, do you remember the locket—on her white arm?

COLONEL.

And her mild blue eyes.

FAT MINISTER.

Ay, ay—He's wanting to introduce his story again; and to tell us how she look'd when the soldiers crowded round the tent to listen to her song.

COLONEL.

Sweet was her song.

And soft the enchanted air,
That angels paused, and hung
Their golden harps.

ENSIGN.

She did not know at that time that her lover was wounded.

FAT MINISTER.

Come, Nan—give us one of your songs.

DAUGHTER.

Yes, papa.

Down in the vale,
The dew hung on the rose—

FAT MINISTER.

None of your vales, nor your dews and your roses—and your flowery fields, and your myrtle

groves.

Play, "Up and waur them a', Willie."
Miss, are you for a jig?

COLONEL.

Ladies, good-night—I have seen the time when I would have passed up amongst the gayest—I am now an old fellow.

FAT MINISTER.

And has a tear for pity.

COLONEL.

Yes, sir; and a heart that can feel the happiness of others.

(They all crowd round him.)

Oh, sir, you must not leave us—you must not go away.

(The Company move to the Withdrawing Room.)

FAT MINISTER.

Come, Miss, give us your Italian—

MISS.

Yes, papa.

Si li si ti o to,
Ki li qui si o so,
Fa la se scud.
Qui a vi a vi a,
Que a vi a ve a,
Qui a vi a bo, &c.

Enter MRS CONSUL and her GRANDCHILD.

MRS CONSUL.

Madam, I beg you ten thousand pardons, it was not in my power to wait upon you at dinner; there is no separating my grandchild and the little black girl.

CHILD.

O mamma, I'm frightened!

MRS CONSUL.

Why are you frightened?

CHILD.

The little girl says, a great fish (a crocodile) came out of the water, (the Ganges,) and devoured her father—and a fine gentleman came running with a sword, and stabb'd the monster—and her father was all bloody, and she would have been killed; but the fine gentleman took her away, and they were carried by black mans with muslin on their head, (turbans)—and the fine gentleman gave her to a great lady—All the fine things could not make her forget her poor father—He was very hungry, and as she lay on his arm, beneath the tree where the ugly monster came, he was giving her a little rice—it is all—the last mor—sel.

FAT MINISTER.

Hold your tongue, my bonny dear, and you and the black girl shall go to the dancing school.

CHILD.

No, mamma.—(*Cries.*)

MRS CONSUL.

No, my love.—(*One of the gentlemen takes her on his knee—dries her eyes.*)

(*A Footman enters.*)

The coach is come, madam.

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE.

Madam, we are going to the play; will you be so obliging as make one of the party? It will divert miss.

CHILD.

Take me home, mamma—take me to Cloy.

T.

A name for a dog.

MRS CONSUL.

Come, my dear—Excuse me, madam—my child is really not well—feel her hand—I am afraid she's feverish.

(*The Apothecary steps aside, and whispers—*)

Madam, you had better give miss a little senna and a puke; if it operates six times, it will be sufficient.

(*They go to the Playhouse.*)

Mr Woods comes on the stage, and makes a genteel apology, that the play, from an accident, must be put off for half an hour.

In the meantime, Mrs Kennedy (though not expressed in the bills) obligingly appears, and sings—

How sweet's the love
That meets return.

Then a beautiful young girl, dressed in the character of Spring, sings, and skimming along the stage,—

When you hear a mournful tale,
Laugh and hide your tears;
When you hear a mournful tale,
Laugh and hide your tears.
La—a—a—a—laugh, &c.

"This is poor entertainment"—(*from one of the boxes.*)

An orange from the footman's gallery hits the Irishman such a blow on the nose.—He flies upon the stage, drawing his dagger—throws one of the players heels o'er head—wounds Mr Hallion—makes such a hubbub, the gentlemen from the pit are obliged to interfere.

The house in great confusion—the company, crowding to the door, with great difficulty get to their coaches—a dreadful storm—a dark night—a nabob's carriage driving like Jehu—the coachman, being drunk, overturns one of the hackneys—they shriek frightfully, and the minister roars like a bull.

The old Ensign, chancing to walk on foot, comes up, and helps to lug them out.

[1] The lamentable occurrence, to which allusion is here made, is as follows:—

A venerable missionary was put ashore on one of the South Sea Islands, where he was most graciously received by the king, queen, and the rest of the royal family. During the time the vessel remained, which was only a few days, this useful person was fed most luxuriously, and every attention was paid to him—the result of which was, that in a short time he became uncommonly plump. The vessel which brought him, had occasion a few months afterwards to touch at the island, and inquiry was made for the excellent person who had been left there. But the king and court did not seem inclined to afford much information, merely contenting themselves with answering, "Squi wab squob squavarab skoi rig," which, being interpreted, runs thus, "Very fine man the missionary." At last the captain got the king and some of the chiefs to dinner, when his majesty, (after having got drunk, in answer to an inquiry after the missionary,) exclaimed, "Squi wab squob squavarab skoi rig, skadery shoy oy lig baggary bhum;" meaning, "Fine man the missionary—eat him all up one day."

It turned out that the missionary, in consequence of good usage, had got so fat and sleek, that the king and chiefs could not resist the inclination, which, during the progress of his fattening had been increasing; so they gave a public feast, at which the missionary, cooked in a variety of ways, formed the standing dish.

[2] Afterwards a Writer to the Signet—better known as the great Peat Moss Philosopher.

[3] Bannatyne Club Edition. Edin. 1811.

[4] Poeticé for thoughts.

[5] Ascribed to the immortal quill of Mr Charles Doyne Sillery. See *New Scots Mag.* vol. ii. p. 168.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE HUBBLE-SHUE ***

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