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Craig Gibson, Alexander (1813-1874)

Branthet Neuk Boggle
(A Teal for a Winter Neeght.) (1869)

[63]

'At Marron Beck's a bonnie beck, what mazelin wad deny?
An' what compares wi' Branthet Neuk 'at Marron Beck gā's by?
Wid hoozes white, an' worchets green, an' Marron runnin' clear,
Eigh! Branthet Neuk's a heartsome spot i' t' sūnny time o' year !

But loave ! it is a dowly pleàce when winter neeghts growe lang ;
For t' lwoan lig's dark atween it's banks,—a flaysome rwoad to gang
When t' wind rwoars wild in t' trees abeùn, an' Marron rwoars below,—
An' Branthet Neuk's a hantit spot, as I've some reeght to know.

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They say a heidless woman woaks at sartin neeghts o' t' year,
An' greàns an' yewls at sec a rate as freeghtens fwoke to hear;
I wadn't mind sec teàls, but yance I gat a freeght me-sel'
I' Branthet Neùk, an' hoo it was, just lissen an' I'll tell.

Yā neeght, lang sen, at Cursmass time, wid Cursmass mak' o' wedder,
A lock on us at Branthet met, to hev a glass togidder;
We crack't, an' jwok't, an' drank, an' smeuk't, while hoaf o' t' neeght went by,
For Isbel Simon' drink was gud, an' we war rayder dry!

'Twas lownd an' leàt—past yan o'clock—wid nūt a spark o' moon:
An' like a clood o' cardit woo', thick snow keep't sinkin' doon,

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When reeght up t' Neùk three Jwohn's an' me went
wādin' heàm through t' snow—
Jwohn Suntan, an' Jwohn Bell o' t' Rayes, an' Jwohn o' Craypless Ho'.

We'd gitten hoaf o' t' way up t' lwoan, —nār Edward Beeby' yat,
An' theear we stopp't, for marcy me! a parlish freeght we gat,
Lood greàns we heard—lang hollow beels, 'at shak't oor varra beàns,
“For God-seàk, lads, mak on,” sez yan, “them's t' heidless woman' greàns!”

"But nay," sez I, "if wantin' t' heid, she raises sec a rout,
I'd like to see what way she taks to fetch sec haybays oot;
They say yan stops a woman's noise when yan taks off her heid,
But this, by gock! wad mak yan sweer they're noisy whick or deid."

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It's Burns 'at sez Jwohn Barleycwoon can ma bold as brass;
An' Isbel' drink meàd me quite keen this grenin' thing to feàce.
We shootit Edward Beeby up an' meàd 'im git a leeght—

He grummel't sair to be disturb't at sec a time o' neeght,

But brong yan oot;—an', led bee t' lugs, we follow't efter t' soond,
While clwose t' swine-hull dooar we com, an' stopt, an' gedder't roond.
"By gockers, lads !" Jwohn Suntan said, "It's no' but Edward' swine!"
"Nay, nay," sez Edward, "mine's i' soat—it's nea pig o' mine ! "

"Well, I'll gā in, an' see," sez I. O' t' rest steud leukin on
As in I creept wid t' leeght, an' fund greit lang Joe Nicholson
[67]

Hoaf covert up wid mucky strea,—soond asleep,— and *snworin'*,
As if o't' bulls o' Dean war theear, an' ivery bull was rwoarin'.

We trail't him oot, an' prop't him up ageàn t' oald swine-hull wo'—
An' dazet wid coald he glower't aboot, an' dadder't like to fo' —
We help't 'im in, an' hap't 'im weel, on t' squab aback o't' dooar,
He said his wife had barr't 'im oot, as oft she'd deun afooar.

Sez Jwohn o' t' Rayes, "If iv'ry neeght he maks sa gurt a din,
It's rayder queer a wife like his sud iver let 'im in;
It's varra weel we hārd 'im though, he med ha' dee't o' coald!
Come, let's git yam!"—an' laughin' loud, we lonter't oot o't' foald.
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Jwohn Suntan's rwoad left oor's gay seun, an' soc dud Jwohn Bell's,
An' Jwohn o' Craypless Ho' an' me went poapin' on oorsells,
An' no'but slow, for t' snow was thick, an' meàd it bad to woke,
Sooa mid-leg deep we striddel't on, but offen steud to toke.

Jwohn hed a faymish crack in 'im,—his fadder hed afooar 'im,—
At teàls an' sangs, an' sec like fun not many cud cum ower 'im ;
An' theàr an' than, dud Jwohn set on, at t' furst gud rist we teuk,

To tell me hoo ther com to be a ghost i' Brantl Neùk.

Sez Jwohn, sez he, " I' Branthet Neùk, as varrà weel thoo knows,
'Tween t' beck an' Edward Beeby' hoose ther stan some brocken wo's;
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Lang sen, when they hed roofs on them, yance, leàtish on i' t' year,
Some tinkler fwoke gat leave fray t' lword, an' com to winter thear.

"Two oald fwoke, wid a scrowe o' barns, an' yā son, jūst a man,—
A handy chap to shap' a speun, or cloot a pot or pan,—
An' this chap hed a bonnie wife, 'at dūdn't leuk like t' rest,
But fair, clean-skinn't, an' leàdy-like, an' ol'as nicely drest.

'An' hoo she com to be wid them was niver reeghtly known,
But nebbers so' she wasn't used as if she'd been ther oan;
For t' oald fwoke soas't her neet an' day,—her man —a dūrty tike!—
Wad bray her wid a besom-stick, a thyvel, or sec like;
[70]

"Tull yance a nebber teùk her in, when t' tinklers flang her oot,
An' she let fo' a wūrd or two 'at brong a change aboot;
She telt o' sūm stown geese an' sheep, an' whoar they hed them hidden;
Of mutton up on t' sleeping loft, an' skins anonder t' midden.

"It wasn't many wūrds she said,—but wūrds she said anew
To bring t' oald tinkler and her man tull what was weel ther due;
For lang i' Cārel jail they laid, an' when t' assize com on,
T' Jūdge let t' oald waistrel lowce ageàn, but hang't his whopeful son.

"An' back frae Cārel t' tinkler com, to Branthet reeght away,
An' 'ticet t' poor lass frae t' nebber's hoose whoar she'd been fain to stay;
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He promish't fair to treat her weel, and dūd while t' seckint neeght,
An' than, (reeght pleas't was Branthet fwok,) he meàd a moonleeght fleeght.

“An' days went by an' neàbody went nār to t' tinkler's dooar,
At last some barns peep't in an' so' some huller't bleùd on t' flooar,
An' than t' hoose dooar was drūven in, an' sec a seeght was theer,
'At sūm 'at so 't went reid wid reàge, an' sūm went white wid fear.

"Squeez't up intull a dūrty neùk, an' bleùdy, stark, an' deid,
They fūnd that nice young lass's corp, bit niver fūnd her heid;
T' oald tinkler hoond hed hagg't it off afooar he meàd a fleeght on t',
An' teàn it wid him, fwoke suppwos't, to gud his-sel' wid t' seet on't.
[72]

"An' nin o' t' clan at efter that i' t' country side was seen.
But iver sen a hantit spot hes that Neùk-lonning been,
For t' mūrder't woman wokes aboot, an' greàns, for o' she's deid,
As lood as what we hārd to-neeght,—*they say she laits her heid!*”□

"Wey, weel deùn, Jwohn!" to Jwohn sez I, "an' thenks ta for thy teàl,
It's meàd me hoaf forgit hoo t' snow maks o' my teeàs geàl;
Th'u's just at heàm,—gud neeght, my lad, but fūrst hear this fray me,
If iv'ry teàl 'at's telt be true, thy stwory's neà lee!"