The Salamanca Corpus

Isaac Ritson’s *A Copy of a Letter, written by a Young Shepherd to his Friend in Borrowdale* (1850)

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A
COPY
OF A
LETTER.
WRITTEN BY
A YOUNG SHEPHERD
TO HIS
Friend in Borrowdale.

WITH
A GLOSSARY
OF THE
CUMBERLAND WORDS.

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

PRICE ONE PENNY.
ADVERTISEMENT.

THE favourable reception this following production of an ingenious Cumbrian youth met with on its first appearance, and the repeated calls for it since out of print, will, it is hoped, be esteemed a sufficient apology for reprinting it.

A GLOSSARY is added for the assistance of those readers who may be unacquainted with the dialect of this part of our Island: and to whom without such assistance, many of the provincial words might be wholly unintelligible. The explanations are chiefly those of that much esteemed writer, the late Mr. Clarke, from whose judicious HISTORY of CUMBERLAND they have, with few exceptions, been taken.

COPY
OF A
LETTER.
&c.

FRIEND,

I SEND te thisan, to tell the amackily what dreadfull fine things I saw ith’rwoad tuv an at yon Dublin, an thardships ive bidden. I set for rat o midsummer day, and gat to Whitehebben, a girt seaside town, where sea nags eat cwoals out o rack hurrys, like as barrels does yal drink. I think sea nags are not varry wild, for they win ter them i girt foalds wi out yats, an as I was lukin about to gang to Ireland, I saw tweaw duzzen o fellows myaking a sea nag tedder styake ov iron. I ast yan o them if I cud get ridin to Dublin, an a man in a three uikht hat, at knackt like rotten sticks telt me I mud gang wid him, for a thing they caw tide, like t’post oth land, was ganging, an waddent stay o nea body niver. Then four men in a lile sea nag, a fwoal, (I think at they cawt a bwoat,) hel tert our nag and let it out oth fwoald, than
our nag slipt t'holter an ran away; but they hang up a deal ov wind clayths, like blinder brydals, wi hundreds or ryapes for rines. Land ran away an left us, an our nag had eaten so many cwoals it was cowdy, an cantert up wi ty end an down wi tudder. I turnt as seek as a peet an spewt aw at iver was immo: I thout I sud ha deet; I spewt aw cullers. Neest day after we set forrat, an island met us, they cawt Man. I wud fain a seent cum hard tull us; but it slipt away by an left us; but some mare land met us neest day etter. It was varra shy, but we follet it up, becoze tha said Dublin was ont. I persuadet t'man wi t'three nuikt hat to owrgit if he brast his nag, an he telt a fellow to twin t'tail on't, as tha dyu swine or bulls, when they carry them to bate at Kessick, an tha wi'llt gang on. Than we gat to Dublin prusently; But I hed likt tull a forgotten to tell the seek girl black fish we soo. Tha snowt when tha com out o th girft, tub like thunner, an tha swallow land nags as hens does bigg, mappen eat sea nags when tha dee. It was a nice broet mwornin when we were i' Dublin ba, as tha cawt, whar t'sea gangs up toward t'land as a dog dus to th' heed of a bull. Twa men i' yan o thar bwoats cam to our nag side, tha cawt them paddies; yan cudnt tell thar toke be geese; tha drank harty of our watter, it stinkt tyu, but we had nout better to drink, for t'girt dub' s as sote as brine; it wud pussin the if thou tyasted it. We ga them tewa fellows a helter, an tha led our nag into Dublin, as wild as it was. But, O man! what a fine country there was ov tudder side of us; hooses as white as drip an as rank as mice. Dublin town, it lyuk'd like a girl foald full o sheep, at yan cud nobbut just see the heeds on; chimlies lyukt like hworns, an kurk-steepeles an spires, as tha caw them, like as menny gyat hworns amang tudder. Sea nags is as rank i' Dublin beek, as if thou was lyukin at ten thosan geese in a gutter. Tha hevnt foalds for them as we hev i' England; town keeps them warm i' winter; but tha feed wi' beck-sand, as tha dyu at Whitehebben wi' cwools; but not out o rack hurries, they've a mouth at side, whose men feeds tem in at wi girf iran spuyns. But O man! it was lucky I leet of a man at went to th'seyul wi me when I was a lile lad; we war deevlish thnick, an he sed he wud let me see aw things. If I had gyan into Dublin be mesell, yan may gang fifty miles a day, and nout but hoos for hoos, an like our lwonnins for length. You cannot see yearth for pavement nea whose; nor I sud niver see auld Inglen agyan, if I had been be mesell, I dare say, for tha are the deevil for settin yan rang if yan ass them. Thares hooses tha caw public beeldins, at's sa fine, I cannot tell the what they ur like. The parlemen-hoose, whose gentlen gangs to bate yan anudder, there's a vast o girt styam
props o th' fwor side ont, there's a room wi'
reed furms int whore tha feight, I lyuk its
blood, mappen; there was a lile woman let
us see that hoos, about four fuit hee, she was
as thick as three auld mears twin'd togeedd;
I wundert she didnt grow heer, leaving in
a hoos twenty or thirty fuyt hee, but she was
bryad as a hayacock. Anenst it about a
styan thro off the parlemen-hoos, was collers
ship-hoos; its a bigger plyace ner tudder; if
thou was plyacet whore gir crags hing owr
ov aw sides o the, it wad be like t' square,
as tha cawt, i' th' middle o th' collership-
hooses. Fwok at I saw they were myast o
them as black as deevils. It sartainly isn't
hell, but tha say tha git deed fwok out o thur
gryaves; I think its true, for I see a varst o
deed fwoks byans, an some lockt up in glass
collins wi' flesh on, an tha had bars, an
bits o flesh prisirvd i' bottles, as fwoks dus
berries. There was a fellow wid a bunch ov
keys, at open locks and duirs as fast as lyuk;
it myad me think o th' Rebelations whose yan
reads o the keys o death and hell, thou mappen
understands that plyace. We war in a
plyace tha caw musium, where there's aw
things ats comical, a thousan things at tow
niver see nor I can caw; there war muse deer
hwnorns, as bryad as our back-bword, an bits
ov aw manners ov hwnorns, I cannot tell the
what, but these's the nyam in the Rebel-
ations, an weel heve a vast o talk when I shall
get yable to come an see the.
I was at a plyace they caw t' Exchange,
whore fowks fra aw nuiks ov the world meet
togider, to buy an sell aw things at iver
thou can nyam. 'Tmidst ont's like a bee-
hive, but stands 't top o lang freestan legs,
wid a girr round winda i' the crown ont, an
like a wide house round about legs, at covers
as nickel grund as t' tarn at t' Gowd-Ark
ion, thou kenst. I saw o plyace tha caw cas-
sel, where a man they caw Tennant leaves,
he's stuart ov Ireland for our king, t' lword
mear ov Dublin's his heed searrvant; an fwok
sed he went thro' hell to kurk ivry Sunday.
I thout it had been some street lwonnin, mapp-
en, at tha cawt sa, but I fairly saw him
stannin like a duir steed, raised about tweo
yards o the yearth, but I think he was chain-
ed tu th' spot, becos he dundt stur, mappen
deed; but it was a dark black lwonnin, co-
verd owre wi' black hooses, an I persuad
my suit to carry me a good way off sic curi-
osity's, for I was amayst fretint to deeth,
but it was varra weel I had strent to run
away. Now thou may be sure I gey my com-
rad a deevilish lesson for trailin me throu hell,
hes flait o nout, but carryt me to parish
kurf; its as-big as a town for girness, an
as menny fwok at it; there was hoaf a du-
zen o preasts at wark, but weed nobbut staid
a bit when summet they caw roworgins be-
gan a beelin like a hundred mad bulls, an as
menny lile lads i thar sarks began a sreecin murder, I think, for ivry beel was like thunner. my feet then carryt me without persuadin, in a calleevir owr fwock an aw at was imme way, till I gat into a a girl feeld a mile aboot, tha cawd it Steben's green, I think after a man on a girl gray nan, at was staninnen a-top on a lile hoose i' t' midst ont; heed his sword drawn, but he durstnt git off for want o room. I think tha sed he'd been freetint as I was, but I was sa freetint I hardly knew what I dud or sed; but I saw anudder man o' top of a lile hoose, i' th' midst of a girl street lownin; I think they were brudders, for their owadts were like a sloted hoos side, an tha war as pale as deeth i' th' face, like mesell; round t' fwoor cawd feeld was t' finest gravel gate thou iver stept on, an there was hundreds an thousands o fwocks stavelin aboot ont. I began to be as mad as I was at cwolly, when it brak t' neck o' t' bell wether, at tha waddent help t' man on his owen nag when it was amyst dark; I was mad an swet for feer, and durst not say a word becase there was sa menny three nuikt hat men thee an lyadies as tha caw them, (I'd better been in Borrodale.) I hev oft thout sen if we hed yan o them lyadies amang our bigg, she wad sarra to keep t' crows oft bravely. I ast a man at I kent what was t' matthe wi sum o th' wummon fwock at tha war sa bryad tea way, an he telt me it was a fashion to weer huips;

ut a baddin nowther if it keeps their legs to-gidder, for there was sum o them varra bonny; but I waddent hev yan o them for a wife if she had aw Borrodale, without they'd doff their huips when they gang to bed, for they are as bryad as enny bed in Borrodale, an thou knows there wad be nea room buta-top o them an what sleep cud yan get a-top of a whick bed? Hang them thyar aw white-heeded, like our weet miller lasses, an tha talk an yilp like mice. I wonder what tha see, at fancy sic, but tha hev nice lile fuits, makes me think they wad prove nimmel shepherts ov our brant fellas; an we wad learn them to sove an eclip, an the huip pockets wad be varra sarviceable to put a lam in ov aider side in a coold mornin i' spring, when their starv amyast, and get lile milk; but to be shwort, as our preast says in his sarment, I hedt time to think ov aw this when I sawt, for my fuit ran winne thro amang fwock an owr fwock so fast, I freetint them. They thout that th' donnet was imme, they mud ha thout reet, if they'd thout t' donnet hed setten me forrat, for if tha keep sek farlies o purpos to freetin fwocks, there's nea matter how menny o them be troddin to deeth: but I'll promis thee I niver stopt till I gatt to a sea nag at cum tuv Inglan, an I was seek agyan alwore I gat hame, I cud nowther eat nor drink aw the time, an if thou see me now, thou cudden tell me be a frosk, at had been hung up bith
heels in a sunshine, an dryt to deeth, for Ise as thin as lenten leets.

I think thou munnet expect to see me this month, this is three days at hame, an I've a stomach fit to eat t' horse ehint t' stable. I git five myals a-day, an a snack when I gang to bed. I hwop Ise git strang agyan or it be lang, an than I shall come an see thee. This is nobbet like the clock when its giving warnin to strike, to what I shall tell thee when I cum.

My kind lyuiv to thee, and may gyud luck keep thee fra aw ats bad, an dunnet be seen o gangin abroad for fear the donnet git thee.

A GLOSSARY
OF THE
PROVINCIAL WORDS.

AMACKILY, in some fashion
Ast, asked
Brant, steep
Bryad, broad
Brudders, brothers
Ccwoils, coals
Cawt, called
Ccwoats, coats, garments of any kind
Ccudden, could not
Donnet, a Cumberland term for devil
Ehint, behind
Forrat, forward
Frosk, a frog
Girt, great
Gangin, going
Helter, a horse collar made of hemp which is frequently used as a bridle
Hworns, horns
Huips, hoops
Imme, in, or within me
Kurk, church
Lvonnins, lanes, here used for streets
Lile, little
Luive, love
Myakin, making or doing
Mappen, perhaps
Mickle, much
Nobbut, only
Nuikt, with corners
Oppent, opened
Ryaps, ropes
Sarra, serve
Thisan, this
Towert, towards
Tudder, the other
Varra, very
Waddent, would not
Wimma, with me
Yal, ale,
Yats, gates
Yilp, a term here used to express the chirping of birds, mice, &c.

FINIS.
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