

**HELGA; A POEM
IN SEVEN CANTOS**

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Helga; A Poem in Seven Cantos by William Herbert

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WILLIAM HERBERT

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IN SEVEN CANTOS**

HELGA.

A POEM.

IN SEVEN CANTOS.

BY

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM HERBERT.

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1815.

PREFACE.

THE following poem, which has remained for several years in an unfinished state, was commenced soon after the publication of the translations which I made from the relics of ancient Icelandic or Scandinavian poetry. I was at that time forcibly struck with the poetical images which the manners and religion of the northern nations

appeared to present; and, feeling that I was prevented from giving them full effect by the fidelity which I deemed necessary in the translation of writings which derived their principal interest from their antiquity and peculiarities, it occurred to me that, by undertaking an original poem of which the scene might be laid amongst the ancient Scandinavians, I should be able to illustrate their manners, and religion, and superstitions, in a form that would be more pleasing to the reader, and to avail myself of a wide field for poetical

composition, which had been as yet untouched by any writer except in a few short and unconnected translations. My attention was afterwards withdrawn from the undertaking by other pursuits ; and the poem, which had been long neglected, has been lately completed and revised. The foundation of the tale is historical ; in what respects I have altered it will be stated in the notes. The poem will, I hope, be found to contain a faithful picture of the manners and superstitions of the period which it represents. I have

attempted to give it the coloring of poetry,
and to temper with chaster ornaments
the rude wildness of Scaldic fiction.

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