

**HELENORE: OR THE
FORTUNATE
SHEPHERDESS, A
PASTORAL TALE**

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Helenore: Or the Fortunate Shepherdess, a Pastoral Tale by Alexander Ross & Alexander Thomson

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ALEXANDER ROSS & ALEXANDER THOMSON

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FORTUNATE
SHEPHERDESS, A
PASTORAL TALE**

HELENORE;
OR THE
FORTUNATE SHEPHERDESS.

A PASTORAL TALE.

By **ALEXANDER ROSS, A. M.**
LATE SCHOOLMASTER AT LOCHLEE, AND AUTHOR OF SE-
VERAL POEMS IN THE SCOTTISH DIALECT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

The Life of the Author.

COMPREHENDING

A PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF THE ROMANTIC
PLACE WHERE HE LIVED,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE

Manners and Amusements of the People at that Period.

BY HIS GRANDSON,

THE REV. **ALEXANDER THOMSON,**
MINISTER OF LENCHRYSTON.

.....Ilk Angles and Meens bairn,
Thy tales and songs by heart shall learn.
MATTIE.

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E. S. L.

LIFE
OF
THE AUTHOR.

MR ALEXANDER ROSS was born the 13th of April, 1699, in the parish of Kincardine O'Neil, county of Aberdeen. His father, ANDREW ROSS, a respectable farmer in that parish, sent him, when capable of instruction, to the parochial school, distant about three miles, and situated in the large village of Kincardine O'Neil. The master of this seminary was at that time a Mr PETER REID, who had received a liberal education, and was considered by proper judges as an excellent grammarian, and complete master of the Latin language. All over that country he was celebrated, particularly for uncommon diligence and success in his office. It is certain, indeed, that a considerable number

of young men taught at this school by Mr REID, appeared every year in Aberdeen at the competition for bursaries, which took place about the end of October at King's and Marischal colleges; and that not less than six, on an average, were successful candidates.

It would appear that a Latin education was then much desired for their children by parents, in the north of Scotland, and particularly in this county, whatever employment these children might afterwards choose when they came to the years of judging for them selves.

It is remarkable that other three boys, all of the name of Ross, and sons of a neighbouring farmer, accompanied our Author every day to this public school. They persevered for the usual length of time, about four years, in acquiring such knowledge of the Latin as to fit them for the college: all contended for bursaries at Aberdeen, and were successful; continued four sessions at Marischal College, and took the degree of A. M. The youngest, ROBERT Ross, and as our Author has often observed, the best scholar of the three, became farmer, and in that capacity lived independent and respected for life. The other two, ALEXANDER and

DAVID, studied divinity, and were licensed to preach the gospel. The latter was appointed schoolmaster of Kincardine O'Neil; preached occasionally; was much esteemed as a man and a preacher, and acted as presbytery-clerk for many years. But though a man of considerable merit, never obtained a settlement in the church.

In this brief account now given of Mr DAVID ROSS, who was an amiable character, and one of our Author's most intimate and dearest friends, it perhaps deserves notice, that though a man of very delicate health, often sickly, complaining of head-aches, and all his lifetime having much the appearance of being in a valetudinary state, yet he lived to the age of ninety. His oldest brother, ALEXANDER ROSS, not of equal merit, was, though at a late period of life, more successful; and it is also a remarkable circumstance, that he was ordained minister of Lochlee; and though not less than sixty-six years of age when his settlement took place, yet lived for twenty-one years pastor of this parish; and during that time was cotemporary with our Author as schoolmaster, who had been his school and college companion.

Considering then how common it was at that time,

and in that country particularly, for every parent in tolerable circumstances to send one or more of his sons to school to be taught the Latin language, with a view to prepare them for the university, it was perhaps more from custom and example, than from any appearance of distinguished capacity, that our Author was, about the age of eight, put into the elementary class. And when we think of the mode of education then prevalent, not only in this school but in every seminary of the kind in Scotland, it is natural to suppose that to many a poor boy the acquisition of such a complicated language as the Latin, must have been a task sufficiently hard. Considering also the difficulty that must have arisen from the use of rudiments without one word of English in them, a custom universal at that time, nothing but a tenacious memory, a considerable degree of acuteness, and a hearty desire to improve, could, one should think, smooth the rugged path in which the Latin scholar had to tread, and render it in any degree pleasant, or even tolerable.

Our Author has often remarked, that upon the whole —boys were then compelled to learn. Public teachers never thought of making trial of the talents of a boy in order to discover if he was qualified by nature to ac-

quire any language or branch of education; and if he was not, of directing his attention to something else perhaps more useful in life, and more adapted to his capacity. But when a boy had once begun to learn Latin, arithmetic, or what his parents wished him to learn, he was obliged to persevere, and make what progress he could.

The strictest and most severe discipline was systematically kept up by the master. Scarcely any allowance was made for a weak memory. The want of that progress wished or expected, was seldom imputed to the want of capacity, but of application. A blunder or an error could not commonly be atoned for by the poor boy who had fallen into it, by any indications of sorrow, but by submitting without murmur to the usual chastisement: and upon the whole it would appear that fear was the predominant motive for diligence.

It deserves perhaps to be likewise mentioned that every lesson prescribed in VIRGIL, HORACE, OVID, or any other Latin poet, was not only to be explained to the satisfaction of the master, but gotten by heart. And so rivetted had many of the most beautiful passages been in our Author's memory, that he used to repeat

them with much pleasure after he had passed the age of eighty. With the pastorals of VIRGIL he was particularly and wonderfully delighted, on account of their innocence, simplicity, delightful scenery, and diversity of subjects, as well as beauty of description.

Many of the odes of HORACE, but such only as are of a moral tendency, he translated into English metre, merely for his own amusement, and to entertain some of his intimate acquaintance; but he never did or intended to publish them, because he thought they were not of sufficient merit to meet the public eye.

To the Scottish dialect he had contracted a great partiality from his early youth. This might be owing to the prevalence of this expressive language at that period; but especially to his opportunities of seeing some excellent Scottish poems which he said formed his taste, and disposed him to try something of the same kind.

'The Gentle Shepherd,' that fine pastoral comedy by RAMSAY, who has perhaps justly been denominated the Scotch THEOCRITUS, our Author admired very much; and though, as he often said, he had read it over a hun-