

**A BREIFFE NARRATION OF
THE SERVICES DONE TO
THREE NOBLE LADYES.
M.DC. XXXI.-M.DC.XLIX.**

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A Breiffe Narration of the Services Done to Three Noble Ladyes. M.DC. XXXI.-M.DC.XLIX. by
Gilbert Blakhal

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GILBERT BLAKHAL

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**PREIST OF THE SCOTS MISSION IN FRANCE, IN THE LOW COUNTRIES,
AND IN SCOTLAND.**

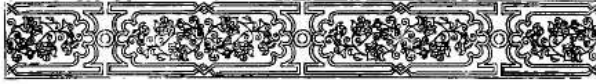
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The Editor's Preface.



HERE is little known of the Author of the following Work beyond what he has there recorded of himself. A family of the name of Blackhall appear, in the fourteenth century, as proprietors of the lands of Blackhall, situated in the district of The Garioch, in Aberdeenshire.¹ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we find them still in possession of these lands, together with the office "Coronatoris et Forrestarie regalitatis de Gareochie."² Father Blakhal does not state that he was descended of this family, but he incidentally mentions, in these Memoirs, that he was descended from the ancient and honourable house of Balquhaine, and in another place he alludes to his descent from the Ogilvies of Findlater. Alexander Blakhall, of Finnerseye, in the parish of Echt, and Robert Blakhall, in Cruden, were his cousins, as well as Mr. James Forbes, whose name frequently occurs in his first chapter.³ It is not unreasonable to conjecture that he was a relative of Mr.

¹ [On 10th August, 1396, Willielmus de Blackhall is one of the inquest which returned William of Tulliduff, as heir to his father, John of Tulliduff, in the Lands of Ledynsochach and Roimase. (Registrum Aberdonense, vol. I., p. 201. Printed for the Spalding Club.)]

² [Willielmus Blakhall is served heir to his father, William Blakhall of that ilk, on 1st Feb. 1547, in terris de Blakhall in regalitate de Gareochie A. E. 40a. N. E. 28, Officio Coronatoris et Forrestarie regalitatis de Gareochie, A. E. 10a. N. E. 30a. Inquis. Retorn. Abb. vol. i. (4.)]

On 29th Sept. 1643, John Blackhall is returned as heir male to his father, William Blakhall, "in villa et terris de Blakhall, cum duabus croftis terre ejusdem infra parochiam de Innerurie; officio coronatoris et forrestarie de Garioche A. E. 40a. N. E. 24; villa et terris de Auldston de Knokinblebis (vel Knokinblewis) infra baroniam de Balquhayne et parochiam de Innerurie. A. E. 20a. N. E. 40a. Inquis. Retorn. Abbrev. vol. i. (270.)]

³ [Services Done to Three Noble Ladies, pp. 5, 44, 72.]

William Blakhall, a Regent in Marischal College, regarding whom we are informed by Spalding :

" About the 24 of February, Mr. Williams Blakhall, one of the regentis of Colledge Marschall, a prompt scoller, bred, borne, and brocht up in Aberdene, and never yit out of the countrie, refusit to subscribe the countrie covenant, as the rest did, quhairupone he was deposit of his regency; thairefter he leivit simply in sober maner within the toune. He is callit in suspitioun of poperie, he is convenit before the session of Abirdene, and at last brocht befor the presbiterie vpon the forsaid 24 of Februar, the samen then sitting within the Colledge of Old Aberdene, Mr. David Lindsay, persone of Balhelvy, moderatour. He is accusit of what religioun he wes of, and of what kirk he wes. Efter sum anaweris, at last he planelie and avoutlie declairit he was ane Romane Catholik, and wold byd be the samen, to the astonishment of the hail heiris, being of ane uther profession, as appeirit, and so pertuis (now in tymes of the hottest persecutioun of papistis heir in this land) to manifest himself so. Aluies, efter sum dealling with him by the ministrie and bretheren, at last he is excommunicat, and chargit to conforme or leave the countrie. This may be nottit with the fyres of the said Marschall Colledge, as ye have befor, as ane second visit; the thrid followis. This Blakhall wes excommunicat upone the 30 of Marche, syne leavis the countrie." ¹

A Thomas Blakhall, burges of Aberdeen, who is also referred to by Spalding, was also probably connected with our Author. ²

It appears, from the scanty records which still exist of the early history of the Scotch College at Rome, that Blakhal was received as a student into that seminary in the year 1626.

This College was founded by Pope Clement VIII., in the year 1600, with the view of furnishing to a few Scotch youths the ecclesiastical education which the circumstances of their own country did not permit them to receive at home. For fifteen years it was directed by an Italian prelate, Monsignor Paulini. In 1615, Father Patrick Anderson, a talented Scotch Jesuit, nephew to Dr. John Lesly, Bishop of Ross, received the charge of the College. After a short time, he went as missionary to Scotland, where, in 1620, he suffered a

¹ [History of Troubles, 1624—1645, vol. II., pp. 10, 11.]

² [Mr. Thomas Blakhall, ane burges of the toune, causit bring his laifal barnie to the kirk to be baptisit upone the tent of Aprile abefoir (1643), and held wpe the barnie in his ounie hand as the custom is, bot Mr. Andrew Cant wold not give the barnie baptisime in the fathers hand, whill ane goosop gat the barnie in his hand, alledging he was ane papist, syne baptisit the barnie. Sic heirefter moir. (Hist. of Troubles, vol. II., p. 154.) Upone the samen Sunday and 8 of October Mr. Thomas Blakhall and his wyf both excommunicat as papistis. (*Ibid.*, p. 150.)]

severe imprisonment for his religion. On being released, he went to England, where he died in 1624. He is the author of a work still extant, entitled, *The Ground of the Catholique and Roman Religion on the Word of God*. 1623. 4to.

When Father Anderson left Rome, the College was for a short time put under the direction of Italian Jesuits, but, in 1622, received for its superior Father George Elphinstone, another Scotch Jesuit, who continued in that office till 1644. It was under this Father, therefore, that Blakhal pursued his studies.

Among his fellow students were John Smith and Francis Dempster, with three others, who became afterwards priests in the Society of Jesus. Smith and Dempster were both missionaries in Scotland, and suffered incarceration as such. The latter carried on a controversy with John Menzies, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen, some pieces of which were printed.¹ Other College companions of Blakhal were William Leslie, who died, at an advanced age, Canon of St. Quintin's, in France, and Thomas Chambers, who became one of Cardinal Richelieu's almoners, with two others, Gilbert Brown and Alexander Young, who became priests, but of whose subsequent history nothing is known.

The students of the Scotch College at Rome at that time prosecuted their studies by assisting at the lectures and academical exercises given in the celebrated University, called the Roman College, in which then, as now, all the Professors were Jesuits.

Blakhal continued a member of the Scotch College for four years. Having terminated the usual curriculum of theology, he was ordained sub-deacon on the 23d of February, deacon on the 16th, and priest on the 30th March, Easter Eve, 1630. His companion, Gilbert Brown, who had entered the seminary with him, was ordained at the same time.

¹ [One of Mr. Menzies' pamphlets was printed at the expense of the Magistrates of Aberdeen, and is entitled "*Papismus Lucifugus; or, a Faithful Cople of the Papers exchanged betwixt Mr. John Menzies, Professor of Divinity in the Marischal Colledge of Aberdene, and Mr. Francis Dempster, Jesuit, otherwise surnamed Ria or Logan. Aberdene: Printed by John Forbes, younger, Printer to the Town. Anno Dom. M.DC.LXXVIII.*" An Answer appeared, entitled, "Scolding no Scholarship in the Abuse; or, Groundless Grounds of the Protestant Religion, as holden out by Mr. Menzies, in his brawlings against Mr. Dempster. 1679." Another of Mr. Menzies' productions has the following title: "*Roma Mendax; or, the Falshood of Rome's High Pretences to Infallibility and Antiquity evicted, in Confutation of an Anonymous Popish Pamphlet, undertaking the Defence of Mr. Dempster, Jesuit. By John Menzies, Professor of Divinity in Aberdene. 1679.*"]

Immediately after this he left Rome, and seems to have proceeded directly to Paris, where, in 1631, we find him engaged by his cousin, Mr. Forbes, to be confessor to the Lady Isabelle Hay. His services to this lady, while engaged in performing the functions of his office, occupy the first chapter of his book. After he had seen this lady settled as a Canoness at Mous, he returned to Scotland in 1637, where he performed the duties of a missionary in the shires of Aberdeen and Banff, and at the same time acted as chaplain to the Lady Aboyne, at Aboyne Castle. His services to this lady, while engaged as her chaplain, are contained in the second chapter of his book. His course, as a missionary, (he says, p. 68,) "was not very great, but only from the house of Aboyne to Aberdein, two and twenty miles, where I did confesse and communicat all the Catholics that were their; and from Aberdein to Buchan, a mater of nyntein or twenty miles, where I had but five Catholic houses to go to; Blaire, tenna miles from Aberdein; and Shives, fyve or six miles from Blaire; and Gicht, as far from Shives; and Artrachy, nynne or teune miles from Gicht; and Cruden, six miles from Artrachy; and the distance betwixt these houses obliged me to stay a night in each of them to say messe, confesse, communicat, and exhort the Catholics be way of a short preaching; and from Buchan to Strathbogie, wher I used to stay but three or four nights, the first in the village, they cal it the Raus, in Robert Rinne his house, an hostellerye, wher the poor Catholicks convened; the second, in Carneborrow, wher Neulesly and his daughter did come to me, and sometimes I did go to Neulesly his house; the third night to Craigge, six miles from Carneborrow, and Carneborrow is four miles from Strathboggie."

After the death of the Countess of Aboyne, he returned to France, in the month of April, 1643, with the view of inducing the Marchioness of Huntly to withdraw her young grand-daughter, and only child of the Countess of Aboyne, from Scotland, and bring her to France to be educated. Having failed in this purpose, he applied to the Queen of France to use her influence in accomplishing his design; and the good services which he rendered to this young lady, in bringing her out of Scotland, and afterwards settling her in France, occupy the third chapter, and the largest portion of the work.

The eve of Blackhall's life is equally obscure as its morning. The Narrative now printed was written, as appears by a comparison of dates mentioned in it, in the year 1666 or 1667. He was then at Paris. How long he survived the composition of it, is unknown.