LEGENDS OF THE BRAES O' MAR

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OF

THE BRAES O' MAR

BY

JOHN GRANT,
GLENGAIRN.

"Tales of the Times of Old—of the Deeds of the Days of other Years."—OSSIAN.

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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

TO throw a little light on the Legends that follow, a few Historical Notes are here given. The authorities are set down from which the notes were gleaned, that the reader may judge for himself how far they are to be depended upon.

In the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen,"* we find, that—

"Mar is so named from Martach, one of Fergus the First's Captains, to whom that prince gave it for a possession. (A.C. 300).

"It is reckoned the chief district in all Aberdeenshire, both as it is the largest, as it contains the seat of the ecclesiastic and civil judge, and as the people in it are reckoned the most ingenious, excelling both in arts and arms. Hence it is said by one of our poets (John Barclay),

'Marria sic amata Musis;'
Mar by all the Muses loved;

and again in a common rhyme,

'The brave bowmen of Mar.'

"And on these accounts it is, that even the whole shire is sometimes called the shire of Mar."

The next notice of Mar seems to be that in the Tables of "Skene's Highlanders of Scotland."†

"(A.C. 121.) The Caledonians consisted of 18 tribes according to Ptolemy. The tenth tribe, the VACOMAGOI, inhabited the County of Elgin, Strathspey, Strathavon, Braemar, and Strathardle. The TAXALOI, the twelfth tribe, inhabited Buchan and Banffshire."

In this, mention is only made of the inhabitants of Braemar and Buchan. The Braes of Mar, properly speaking, consist of the five parishes, Braemar and Crathie united, and Glenmuick, Glengairn, and Tullich, these three also united. What tribe, or tribes, then, peopled the remainder of Aberdeenshire? It is impossible to say: but in the "View of the Diocese" we learn, that "It was of old the farthest country of the Scots towards the south, on the east coast; for Dee divided them from the Picts."

The next mention of the Braes of Mar we find in Richard of Cirencester,‡ who records the march of Gnenus Tabellus, General of the Emperor Domitian, anno 89, from the South of Scotland to the Moray Firth, to subdue the North of Scotland and the Orkneys. One of the Legions' stages was at Tamea, which is taken to be what is now called Braemar. The Romans were routed, and Tabellus

* Spalding Club Publications. † 2 Vols., London, 1837.
‡ See Laing's Caledonian Itinerary.