

**A BREIFFE NARRATION  
OF THE SERVICES DONE  
TO THREE NOBLE LADYES**

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A Breiffe Narration of the Services Done to Three Noble Ladyes by Gilbert Blakhal

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**BREIFFE NARRATION**

OF

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TO

**THREE NOBLE LADYES,**

BY

**GILBERT BLAKHAL,**

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

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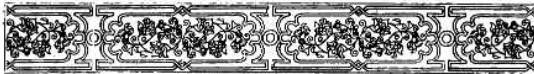
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## The Editor's Preface.



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.<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we find them still in possession of these lands, together with the office "Coronatoris et Forrestariæ regalitatæ de Gareoche."<sup>2</sup> 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 Fannersye, 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.<sup>3</sup> It is not unreasonable to conjecture that he was a relative of Mr.

<sup>1</sup> [On 10th August, 1388, Willielmus de Blackhall is one of the inquest which retoured William of Tulliduff, as heir to his father, John of Tulliduff, in the Lands of Ledyntosechach and Rotmase. (Registrum Aberdonense, vol. i., p. 201. Printed for the Spalding Club.)]

<sup>2</sup> [Willielmus Blakhall is served heir to his father, William Blakhall of that ilk, on 1st Feb. 1547, in terris de Blakhall in regalitate de Gareoche A. E. 40s. N. E. £8, Officio Coronatoris et Forrestariæ regalitatæ de Gareoche, A. E. 10s. N. E. 30s. Inquis. Retorn. Abb. vol. i. (4.)]

On 29th Sept. 1643, John Blackhall is retoured as heir male to his father, William Blakhall, "in villa et terris de Blakhall, cum duabus croftis terræ ejusdem infra parochiam de Innerurie; officio coronatoris et forrestarii de Garrioche A. E. 40s. N. E. £4; villa et terris de Auldoun de Kookinblebis (vel Kookinblewis) infra baroniam de Balquhaine et parochiam de Innerurie. A. E. 20s. N. E. 40s. Inquis. Retorn. Abbrev. vol. i. (270.)]

<sup>3</sup> [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. Williame 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, quhairpoune 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 conventit 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 ansueris, at last he planetic and avoutlicke declairit he was ane Romane Catholik, and wold byd be the samen, to the astonishment of the hail heiraris, being of ane uther profession, as appeirit, and so pertie (now in tyme of the hottest persecutioun of papistis heir in this land) to manifest himself so. Aluicis, efter sum doalling 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 fyre of the said Marschall Colledge, as ye have befor, as ane second visit; the thrid follous. This Blakhall wes excommunicat upone the 20 of Marche, syne leavis the countrie."<sup>1</sup>

A Thomas Blakhall, burgess of Aberdeen, who is also referred to by Spalding, was also probably connected with our Author.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> (History of Troubles, 1624—1645. vol. ii., pp. 10, 11.)

<sup>2</sup> (Mr. Thomas Blakhall, ane burges of the toune, causit bring his lawfull barnie to the kirk to be baptisat upone the tent of Aprile abefoir [1643], and held wpe the barnie in his ouns hand as the custom is, bot Mr. Andrew Cant wold not give the barnie baptisame in the fathers hand, whill ane gosspat gat the barnie in his hand, alledging he wes ane papist, syne baptisat 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. (1644, p. 160.)

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> [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 Aberdeen, and Mr. Francis Dempster, Jesuit, otherwise surnamed Rin or Logan. Aberdeen : Printed by John Forbes, younger, Printer to the Town. Anno Dom. M.DCLXXVIII." 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 Mensels, Professor of Divinity in Aberdeen. 1679."]