

Tales of a Highland Parish  
(Glenshee)

ON THE ROYAL ROUTE  
(with Illustrations).

BY  
REV. T. D. MILLER, M.A.,  
Formerly Minister of Glenshee.  
Author of "Famous Scottish Links," etc.

*"Tir nam beann, nan gleann 's nan gaisgeach."*  
(The land of bens, glens and heroes).

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SECOND EDITION.

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TO MY WIFE.

"Hie away, hie away!  
Over bank and over beae;  
Where the copsewood is the greenest,  
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,  
Where the bracken grows the strongest,  
Where the morning dew lies longest,  
Where the moor-fowl sweetest sips it,  
Where the fairy latest trips it;  
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,  
Lovely, lonesome, cool and green,  
Over bank and over beae!  
Hie away, hie away!"

Sir Walter Scott.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS, ETC.

"The book contains much valuable information regarding Glenshee and neighbouring Glens. The author, who writes easily and fluently, touches upon the early history of this romantic Glen, its manners and customs and land-owners."—*Dundee Advertiser*.

"In Mr. Miller's compact work there is preserved the invaluable lore of a historic locality, told by a master of the subject, who wields a facile pen. The work can be recommended as a model of what a reliable parish history should be."—*The Editor of The Book Lover, Aberdeen*.

*The Aberdeen Free Press and Journal* gave the book a special paragraph, and wrote in similar terms.

"No man was better qualified to do the lone parish justice than Mr. Miller. Everything one would like to know about Glenshee, or that is worth putting in print, is recorded in his book."—*Perthshire Advertiser*.

"As a contribution to Perthshire history, topography and folk-lore it should be assured of a large audience, who, we feel sure, will recognise its merits in spite of its modesty."—*Perthshire Constitutionnel*.

"The book is packed with stories."—*Dundee Courier*.

"It is evident from this charmingly written record of its stories and legends, its people and customs, that the author loves every ben, burn and boulder in the Glen of the Fairies. The book is a *maître à parer*, which should receive an appreciative welcome, not only from the natives of Glenshee and its neighbourhood, but from the many travellers via the Spital and 'The Devil's Elbow.' They could have no better informed or more entertaining guide."—*Life and Work (the Church of Scotland Magazine)*.

"The book is well done."—*The Very Rev. Dr. Inch, Dumbarton, ex-Moderator of the United Free Church*.

"It is a real service when such books are written, for most of what is distinctive of Scottish life is being rapidly lost."—*Rev. H. J. Wotherspoon, D.D., Edinburgh*.

"Mr. Miller has written so that we can share the spell that Glenshee has cast over his heart. I have read his book with interest and with pleasure, and I commend it to all lovers of folk-lore and local history."—*Rev. David Graham in "Week-end Reflections"*.

"The book has only one major defect—it is far too short. . . . Such a book will be looked to by many people, in many ways, as a model."—*G. M. Fraser, Librarian, Public Library, Aberdeen*.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

BESIDES gathering together the legends and lore of Glenshee, I have attempted in this little historical volume to describe the domestic life, occupations and habits of the Perthshire Highlanders in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to picture some of the upper glens as they were, before the date of the clearances, and before the tide of emigration to the Colonies set in. There are few indications now that in these narrow valleys of the Grampians there lived and laboured communities of industrious, hardy and thrifty people, whose wealth consisted in the fewness of their wants.

Except in the laird's houses or those of the graziers, the family occupied one end of the domicile, making it serve as kitchen, day-room and bedroom, and the other end generally housed the cow, the calf, and the poultry. There were few opportunities for intellectual improvement or social recreation.

Very hard things have been sometimes said of proprietors who sought to enrich themselves by converting the smallholdings in the Highlands into large grazings. Pennant in his *Tour in Scotland*, published in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, deplored the fact that the inhabitants of districts where the whole country was converted into a sheep-walk, were "dispersed, forced to change the wholesome, vigorous and innocent lives of rural economists for the sickly, short-lived employ of manufacturers in the great towns."

But there is a bright side even to this distressing picture, for many of the families who earned but a scanty living on these Highland holdings, and who carried with them a knowledge of agriculture, went to other lands where they found a more productive soil, more fruitful seasons, and a more generous return for their labour than what the bleak slopes of the Highlands could provide.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE rapidity with which the first issue was disposed of by the publishers, with the favourable comments made upon it by the press, encourage me to bring out a second edition, which I hope may have as good a reception as the first one.

A Braemar lady, recalling early years, writes:—"How far those old days seem when one thinks of that great concourse of motors that will soon be wending their way to the Games. It is now just fifty years since I first crossed the Cairnwell, at least that I can remember, and in those days the mystery of romance and long distances was wrapped around the journey. Now we pass in a flash." But the writer would be willing to acknowledge that the motor-car has come as a "boon and a blessing" to the Highlands, and that there are hundreds of tourists now where there were only tens a quarter of a century ago. There is not a corner that is unvisited, and the most out-of-the-way hostelry has been searched out and benefited, as have the tourists themselves. That remarkable spectacle of a queue of cars, three miles in length, waiting their turn to negotiate the "Devil's Elbow" for the Braemar Gathering, is more an expression of loyalty than of a desire to see the competitors in their native setting.

I have placed as frontispiece a print of a water-colour sketch by Mrs. Henry James, presented to me by the artist on my leaving the Glen. A photograph has the effect of flattening out the distant scenery and fails to show the majesty of the distant mountains. Dr. Henry James, an English medical practitioner, and his wife became greatly attached to Glenshee, and spent their last years there. They were both gifted artists, he painting in oils, while she chose water-colours.

I am compelled, by weight of evidence, to depart from the belief that the military road between Glenshee and Braemar was made under the superintendence of General Wade, and that the Bridge at the Spital was one of his bridges. The road, it would seem, was laid some years after his death in 1748, and the bridge is therefore only after his pattern.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. A. M. Mackintosh, Nairn; Mr. Mackenzie Shaw, W.S., Edinburgh; Sir William Macara, Bart., Manchester; Mr. J. H. Paterson, Harriestown; Mrs. Sheriff Smith, Selkirk; Major Don of Cray; the Rev. John Thomson, Glenshee; and Major Pullar of Dunbarney.

PREFACE.

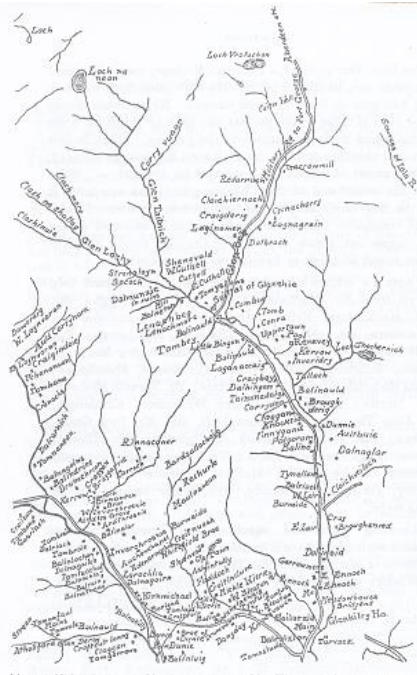
The Hon. Frank Oliver, a Canadian Minister, visited Scotland some years ago, to see for himself the high glens from which so many had gone or been driven to Canada. He had been moved by the tales of those whose parents had been forced to leave the Highlands and make new homes on the prairies. When he saw the ruined shielings and the bare hillsides, his feelings changed, and in a report of his visit of inspection he declared:—"When I saw the actual soil of these historic glens, and compared it with the deep black loam of our fertile western prairies, I came to the conclusion that those harsh landlords who had driven their people out across the seas to Canada, should all have statues raised to them as benefactors of mankind."

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness for valued help received from Mr. Mackenzie Shaw, W.S., Edinburgh; Mr. A. M. MacKintosh, Nairn, author of *The Mackintoshes and Clan Chattan*, etc.; Mr. Ramsay Chalmers, Blairgowrie; Mrs. Sheriff Smith, Selkirk; Lady Ashmore, Edinburgh; Mr. J. H. Paterson, Edinburgh; Mr. William C. Macara, Manchester; Captain Roderick Macdonald, St. Martins; Mr. Norman Methven, of St. Martin's Abbey; Mr. Harry Williamson, Edinburgh; Rev. John Thomson, Mr. James Duff, and Mr. Dan Grant, Glenshee; Mr. Robertson Black, Blairgowrie; Mr. Thomas McLaren, Burgh Surveyor, Perth; Mr. James Craigie, librarian, Sandeman Library, Perth; and to Councillor Baxter, hon. secretary, Perth Gaelic Society, who kindly assisted me in several ways.

Interesting particulars regarding the Braemar families connected with Glenshee will be found in John Grant's *Legends of the Braes of Mar* and Elizabeth Taylor's *Braemar Highlands*, to both of which volumes I have to acknowledge my indebtedness.

T. D. MILLER.

INVERARIES, PERTH.



Map of Kirkmichael and Glenshee, drawn by Mr. Thomas M'Laren, F.S.A., Perth, from Robertson's Map (17th century).

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