

Finegand, sixteen miles from Blairgowrie, cannot have been an easy house to manage, particularly as it was widely known for its Highland hospitality. The head of the house, if he met a gentleman walking on the high road, would think nothing of inviting him to come in for a meal, and the visitor, if he proved to be good company, might be pressed to spend a few days. The writer of this narrative has in his possession several books which such casual guests had sent in token of their appreciation of the kindness and hospitality they had enjoyed. One of these tokens which I have found most easily available is Macaulay's History in four beautifully bound volumes, and is inscribed "Presented to William Shaw, Esq., by Russell Drummond as a mark of respect for the kindness he received during his stay at Finegand. (Dated) 24th October, 1858." Mr. Drummond was probably a Liberal or a Whig, while Mr. Shaw was a strong Tory, and had no great admiration for Macaulay as an historian, but thought he might have rivalled Scott as a writer of historical novels. Macaulay was reputed to be a relative of the Macaulay, the only highland man who wished to earn the £30,000 sterling reward offered for Prince Charlie dead or alive. This reputation would not predispose the recipient to excuse the inaccuracies which he found in the gift. Probably the donor had long arguments with his host during his short stay.

Mr. Shaw was very youthful for his age, and at the time of his death had all his hair and teeth. There was a fire at Finegand in 1878, and fighting the fire, he overtaxed his strength, which brought on the illness from which he died. There was a record snowstorm at the time of his death, and the roads were blocked. At that time there were high stone dykes on both sides of the road, so that the roads were no sooner opened, than they were again blocked by the drifting snow. To make the funeral possible at the kirkyard at the Spittal, the men of the Glen turned out in force, but even then it was often necessary to leave the road and cut across the fields. A brother-in-law, the late Rev. Ralph Colly

was in poor health and had to leave the glen in November to spend the winter in Torquay, the Isle of Wight, or in the south of France. He died at Finegand in May, 1886, and left all the little money he had to his Finegand nephews and nieces.

All the children reached maturity, and three are still alive, James Robertson Shaw, aged over 86, Elspeth Grace Shaw or Black, and William Thomas Shaw, in his eightieth year, who writes this account of his parents and life at Finegand.

In conclusion, I am sure that all the members of the family, whether dead or alive, would agree with me that any success they have achieved is greatly due to our brave, devoted mother, who, by her wonderful work and example, has left us treasured memories that we would wish our descendants to cherish and respect throughout their lives.

She died at Littleton, Inchture, on 9th May, 1919, and is buried in the Spittal of Glenshee kirkyard.

In 1895 the Shaws were evicted from Finegand by the then proprietor Alexander Mackenzie Smith. This was probably the very best thing that could have happened, and the family owe a debt of gratitude to that English gentleman. It is interesting to know that for six months the house and farm stood vacant, as no tenant could be found to give anything approaching the rent that the Shaws had been paying. The place was ultimately let at a rent forty per cent below what the Shaws were paying.

*Written in haste by W. T. Shaw at
Dalruizie House Hotel, 15th July, 1958.*

Smith of Lindsaylands, Biggar, said that he had never attended a funeral under such difficulties or in such inclement conditions.

Mr. Shaw was a J.P. for the County of Perth, and took an active part in public affairs. He had often spoken to two brothers of the name of Downie, who lived in Glenshee. One died at the age of 104, and the other at 106. Both had fought for Prince Charlie at Culloden in 1746. He also remembered the news coming of the British victory at Waterloo in 1815, and how in his youth, the children were kept in order by being told that unless they behaved "Boney" would get them. Just before his death, a fifth son was born, and the father, a keen Tory, intended to have the child christened Benjamin Disraeli Shaw, but as no more sons could be expected, the son was called after his father, William Thomas Shaw. The son arrived exactly a week before the death of the father, and the father was just able, propped up in bed, to hold up the baby to be baptised.

Mr. Shaw seemed to have taken little thought for the morrow, and his widow said that he never worried about provision for his widow and seven young children until he was on his death bed. There was always plenty of good wholesome food at Finegand. Family worship was held every night and a maid brought in with her a kettle of boiling water, the kettle being placed inside the fender. The head of the house read a portion of scripture, said a prayer and when rising from his knees, gave the final order for the day "put on the kettle". Except on very rare occasions, the refreshment was not prolonged, and so to bed. His last words were "mind your Bible and your prayers".

He left very little money, except the stocking of the farms, and his Blacklunnans Estate, but his widow was a fortune in herself, and often exerted herself from daylight to long after dark.

The Trustees at the time of the death were all resident in "the low country" except the youngest brother of the deceased, who

On the next page is a press account of the welcome home from their honeymoon given to Mr. and Mrs. William Shaw. They were married at Slochnacraig on 26th December, 1866. They went to the Caledonian Hotel, Inverness, for their honeymoon, and on their home-coming journey travelled from Pitlochry in a four-in-hand carriage with postilion. The entertainment at Finegand finished with a dance. Amongst the guests was the beautiful Miss Small of Dirnanean, who, while dancing with one of the Finegand ploughmen, remarked that she never expected to dance at Mr. Shaw's wedding (Mr. Shaw was 56 when he married) to which her partner replied "and I never expected to be dancing with the beautiful Miss Small of Dirnanean".

In 1864 Miss Mary Shaw died. She was the eldest sister of William Shaw and of his youngest brother Charles Duncan Shaw. She had kept house for her bachelor brothers, but by 1865 the brothers found that the domestic arrangements were not satisfactory and, after careful consideration, they came to the conclusion that one of them had better get married, but as neither was anxious to undertake matrimonial responsibilities, they agreed to settle the matter by the toss of a coin. It was common talk in the Glen at the time that the older brother lost the toss and had to set about looking for a wife. Of course, being a Shaw, he could, notwithstanding his age, have got a lady with a considerable landed estate, but he felt if he had to get married, he would try for a young bride. His choice was Miss Jean Robertson, daughter of James Robertson, who farmed Slochnacraig and The Kerrow, and who was local factor for the large Glenshee Property owned by Colonel William Macdonald of St. Martins, and other large properties. The bride was educated at Slochnacraig School and in Edinburgh at the Queen Street College for young ladies. She was attractive and capable, and was recognised to be the best dancer in Glenshee, "The Glen of the Fairies". Notwithstanding the great discrepancy in age, the bride's father being the same age as the bridegroom, the marriage turned out to be an unqualified success.